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OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.



THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART FIRST.

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Erceldoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. Uniting, or supposed to unite, in his person, the powers of poetical composition, and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give any thing like a certain history of this remarkable man, would be indeed difficult; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed, on all hands, that the residence and probably the birth-place of this ancient bard was Erceldoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont; and that the appellation of *The Rhymer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There

remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon this subject. In a charter which is subjoined at length, the son of our poet designs himself, "Thomas of Ercildoun. a son and heir of Thomas Rymour of Ercildoun," which seems to imply, that the father did not bear the hereditary name of ~~Larmont~~; or, at least, was better known and distinguished by the epithet which he had acquired by his personal accomplishments. I must, however, remark, that, down to a very late period, the practice of distinguishing the parties, even in formal writings, by the epithets which had been bestowed on them from personal circumstances, instead of the proper surnames of their families, was common, and indeed necessary, among the Border clans. So early as the end of the thirteenth century, when surnames were hardly introduced in Scotland, this custom must have been uni-

From the Chartulary of the Trinity House of Soltra, Advocates Library, W. 4. 14

ERSTLTON.

Omnibus has literas visis vel audituris Thomas de Ercildoun filius et heres Thomæ Rymour de Ercildoun salutem in Domino. Noveritis me per fustem et baculem in pleno judicio resignasse ac per presentes quietem clamasse pro me et heredibus meis Magistro domus Sanctæ Trinitatis de Soltre et fratribus ejusdem domus totum terram meam cum omnibus pertinentibus suis quam in tenemento de Ercildoun hereditarie tenui renunciando de toto pro me et heredibus meis omni jure et clamore quæ ego seu antecessores mei in eadem terra alioque tempore de perpetuo habuimus sive de futuro habere possumus. In cujus rei testimonio presentibus his sigillum meum apposui data apud Ercildoun die Martis proximo post festum sanctorum Apostolorum Symonis et Jude Anno Domini Millesimo cc. Nonagesimo Nono

versal. There is, therefore, nothing inconsistent in supposing our poet's name to have been actually Learmont, although, in this charter, he is distinguished by the popular appellation of *The Rhymmer*.

We are better able to ascertain the period at which Thomas of Ercildoun lived; being the latter end of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to place his death a little farther back than Mr Pinkerton, who supposes that he was alive in 1300 (*List of Scottish Poets*); which is hardly, I think, consistent with the charter already quoted, by which his son, in 1299, for himself and his heirs, conveys to the convent of the Trinity of Soltre, the tenement which he possessed by inheritance (*hereditarie*) in Ercildoun, with all claim which he, or his predecessors, could pretend thereto. From this we may infer, that the Rhymmer was now dead; since we find his son disposing of the family property. Still, however, the argument of the learned historian will remain unimpeached, as to the time of the poet's birth. For if, as we learn from Barbour,¹ his prophecies were held in reputation as early as 1306, when Bruce slew the Red Cummin, the sanctity, and (let me add to Mr Pinkerton's words) the uncertainty of antiquity, must have already involved his character and writings. In a charter of Peter de Haga de Bemersyde, which unfortunately wants a date, the Rhymmer, a

¹ The lines alluded to are these :

I hope that Tomas's prophesie,
Of Erceldoun shall truly be.
In him, etc.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

near neighbour, and, if we may trust tradition, a friend of the family, appears as a witness.—*Cartulary of Melrose.*

It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Ercildoun was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet, and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of those characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun, of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer's prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself. Thus, in *Winton's Chronicle*,

Of this fycht quillum spak Thomas
Of Ersyloune, that sayd in Dorne,
Thare suld meit stalwartly, starke, and sterne.
He sayd it in his prophecy;
But how he wist it was *ferly*.

Book VIII. chap. 32

There could have been no *ferly* (marvel), in Winton's eyes at least, how Thomas came by his knowledge of future events, had he ever heard of the inspired nun of Haddington; which, it cannot be doubted, would have been a solution of the

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

mystery, much to the taste of the prior of Loch-levin.¹

Whatever doubts, however, the learned might have, as to the source of the Rhymer's prophetic skill, the vulgar had no hesitation to ascribe the whole to the intercourse between the bard and the queen of Faëry. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years residence he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure.² Accordingly, while Thomas

¹ Henry, the minstrel, who introduces Thomas into the history of Wallace, expresses the same doubt as to the source of his prophetic knowledge.

Thomas Rhymer into the faile was than
With the minister, which was a worthy man.
He used oft to that religious place;
The people deemed of wit he meikle can,
And so he told, though that they bless or ban,
Which happened sooth in many divers case;
I cannot say by wrong or righteousness.
In rule or war whether they tint or wan:
It may be deemed by division of grace, etc.

History of Wallace, Book II.

² See a Dissertation on Fairies, prefixed to the ballad of TAM-LANE, *Minstrelsy of the Border*, vol. ii. p. 237.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

was making merry with his friends in the tower of Ercildoun, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were composedly and slowly parading the street of the village.¹ The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still «drees his weird» in Fairy Land, and is expected one day to revisit earth. In the mean while, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook), from the Rhymers' supernatural visitants. The veneration, paid to his dwelling-place, even attached itself in some degree to a person, who, within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of Learmont's tower. The name of this man was Murray, a kind of herbalist; who, by dint of some knowledge in simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymers, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard. It seemed to the author unpardonable to dismiss

¹There is a singular resemblance betwixt this tradition, and that occurring in the life of Merlin Caledonius which you will find a few pages onward

THOMAS THE RHYMER

a person, so important in Border tradition as the Rhymer, without some farther notice than a simple commentary upon the following ballad. It is given from a copy, obtained from a lady, residing not far from Ercildoun, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs Brown's MSS. The former copy, however, as might be expected, is far more minute as to local description. To this old tale the author has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of Cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind to the Land of Faërie. To make his peace with the more severe antiquaries, the author has prefixed to the Second Part some remarks on Learmont's prophecies.

* The author has been since informed, by a most eminent antiquary, that there is in existence a MS. copy of this ballad, of very considerable antiquity, of which he hopes to avail himself on some future occasion

THOMAS 'THE RHYMER.

PART FIRST,—ANCIENT.

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank ;
A ferlie he spied wi' his e'e ;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree

Her shurt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne ;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hang fifty siller bells and nine

True Thomas he pulled aff his cap,
And douted low down to his knec,—
“ All hail, thou mighty queen of heaven !
For thy peer on earth I never did sec.”

“ O no, O no, Thomas,” she said ;
“ That name does not belang to me ;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
 "Harp and carp along with me;
 And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
 Sure of your body I will be."

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 That weird shall never danton me."
 Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
 All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
 "True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
 And ye maun serve me seven years,
 Through weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
 She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
 And aye, when'er her bridle rung,
 The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
 The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
 Until they reach'd a desert wide,
 And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
 And lean your head upon my knee:
 Abide, and rest a little space,
 And I will shew you ferlies three.

That weird, etc.—That destiny shall never frighten me

THOMAS THE RHYMLER

O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?—
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires

And see not ye that braid, braid road,
That lies across the heath and lea?—
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

“And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fane and brae?
That is the road to an Elfin land,
Where thou and I this night maun gae
But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if you speak word in Llŷlyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie

They rode on, and further on,
And they waded through rivers to the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea

It was mirk, mirk night, and there was nae starn light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee,
For the blude that's shed on earth,
Runs through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree

« Take this for thy wages, true Thomas ;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.»

« My tongue is mine ain,» true Thomas said ;
« A gudely gift ye wad gie to me !
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst, where I may be.

« I dought na to speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.»
« Now hold thy peace !» the ladye said,
« For, as I say, so must it be.»

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green ;
And, till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen ;

NOTE AND APPENDIX

TO

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART FIRST.

She pu'd an apple frae a tree, etc.—P. 13

The traditional commentary upon this ballad informs us, that the apple was the produce of the fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect.

The reader is here presented, from an old, and unfortunately imperfect MS., with the undoubted original of Thomas the Rhymers's intrigue with the Queen of Faery. It will afford great amusement to those, who would study the nature of traditional poetry, and the changes effected by oral tradition, to compare this ancient romance with the foregoing ballad. The same incidents are narrated, even the expression is often the same, yet the poems are as different in appearance, as if the older tale had been regularly and systematically modernized by a poet of the present day.

Incipit Prophetia Thome de Erseldoun.

In a lande as I was lent,
In the gryking of the day,
Ay alone as I went,
In Huntle bankys me for to play :

I saw the throstyl, and the jay,
 Ye mawes moode of her song,
 Ye wodwale sauge notes gay,
 That al the wod about range
 In that longyng ~~and lay~~
 Undir nethe a dappyl gray,
 I was war of a lady gay,
 Come rydyng ouy, a fair le,
 Zogh I suld sitt to demyday,
 With my tong to wiabbe and wry,
 Certainly all hyr aray,
 It both neuyr discryuyd for me
 Hyr halfra was dappyl gray,
 Sycke on say neuer none,
 As the son in somers day,
 All about that lady shone,
 Hyr sadel was of a rewel bone,
 A semly sight it was to se,
 Bryht with mony a pryncys stone,
 And compasyd all with crapste,
 Stones of oycens gret plenty,
 Her hau about her hede it hang,
 She rode ouer the farnyle
 A while she blew a while she sang,
 Her girths of nobyl like they were,
 Her boculs were of beryl stone,
 Sadyll and brydill war - -
 With sylk and sendel about bedone,
 Hyr patyrel was of a pall fyne,
 And her cropet of the arase,
 Her brydil was of gold fyne,
 On euery side for othe hang bells thre
 Hyr brydil reyness - - -
 A semly syzt - - -
 Crop and patyrel - - -
 In every joynt - - -
 She led thre grow hounds in a leash

And ratches cowpled by her ran;
 She bar an horn about her halse,
 And undyr her gyrdil meny flene.
 Thomas lay and sa ---
 In the bankes of ---
 He said yonder is Mary of Might,
 That bar the child that died for me,
 Certes bot I may speke with that lady bright;
 Myd my hert will breke in three;
 I schal mak hye with all my might
 Hyr to mete at Eldyn Tree.
 Thomas rafhly up he rase,
 And ran ouer mountayn hye,
 If it be sothe the story says,
 He met her euyn at Eldyn tre.
 Thomas knelyd down on his kne
 Undir uethe the grenewood spray,
 And sayd, lovely lady thou rue on me,
 Queen of Heaven as you well may be;
 But I am a lady of another countrie,
 If I be pareld most of prise,
 I ride after the wild fee,
 My ratches rinnen at my devys.
 If thou be pareld most of prise,
 And rides a lady in strang fely,
 Lovely lady, as thou art wise,
 Giue you me leue to lige ye by.
 Do way, Thomas, that were fely,
 I pray ye, Thomas, late me be,
 That sin will fordo all my hartie :
 Lovely ladye, rewe on me,
 And euer more I shall with ye dwell,
 Here my trowth I plyght to thee,
 Where you belene in heuyn or hell.
 Thomas, and you myght lyge me by,
 Undir uethe this grene wode spray,
 Thou would tell full hastely,
 That thou had layn by a lady gay.

Lady, I mote lyg by the,
 Undir nethe the grene wode tre,
 For all the gold in chrystenty,
 Suld you neuer be wayede for me
 Man on molde you will me marre,
 And yet bot you may half you will,
 Trow you well, Thomas, you cheuyest ye while
 For all my bewtie wilt you spill
 Down lyghtyd that lady bryzt
 Undir nethe the grene wode spray,
 And as ye story sayth full ryzt,
 Seuytyn tymes by her he lay
 She seyde, man you lyste this play,
 What berde in bouyr may dle with thee
 That maries me all this long day,
 I pray ye, Thomas, lat me be
 Thomas stode up in the stede,
 And behelde the lady gay,
 Her hcyre hang downe about hyr hede
 The toun was black, the other gray,
 Her clyn semyt oute before was gray,
 Her gay clothyng was all away,
 That he before had sene in that stede
 Her body as blo as ony bede
 Thomas sighed and sayd alleas,
 Me thyne the fulfull syght
 That thou art lady in the face,
 Before you shone as son so bryzt
 Take thy leue, Thomas, at son and mone
 At gite se, and at every tre,
 This twelvemonth sall you with me gone,
 Medylarth you sall not be
 Alas, he seyde, ful wo is me,
 I trow my dedes will werke me care,
 Jesu, my sole tik to ye,
 Whedir so enyr my body sall faie

She rode furth with all her myzt,
 Undir nethe the derne lee,
 It was derke as at midnyzt,
 And cuyr in water unto the kue;
 Through the space of days thre,
 He herde but swowing of a fode;
 Thomas sayd, full wo is me,
 Nowe I spyll for fawte of fode;
 To a garden she lede him tyte,
 There was prayte in grete plante,
 Payres and appless ther were rype,
 The date and the damese,
 The figge and the fylbert tre;
 The nyghtyngale bredying in her nest,
 The papigaye about gan fle,
 The throstylcock sang wold have no rest.
 He pressed to pülle fruyt with his hand
 As man for faute that was faynt;
 She seyde, Thomas, lat it stand,
 Or els the deuyl wil the ataynt.
 Sche said, Thomas, I the hyt,
 To lay thi hede upon my kue,
 And thou shalt see fayrer sight,
 Than cuyr sawe man in their kintre.
 Sees thou, Thomas, yon fair way?
 That lygges ouyr yone fair way?
 Yonder is the way to heuyn for ay,
 Whan synful sawles haf derayed their payne.
 Sees thou, Thomas, yone second way,
 That lygges lawe undir the leye?
 Streight is the way sothly to say,
 To the joyes of paradys.
 Sees thou, Thomas, yone thyrd way
 That lygges ouyr yone how?
 Wide is the way sothly to say,
 To the brynyng fires of hell.
 Sees thou, Thomas, yone fayr castell

That standes ouyr yone fayr hill?
 Of town and tower it beereth the belle,
 In middel earth is non like theretill.
 Whan thou comyst in yon castell gaye
 I pray thu curteis man to be;
 What so any man to you say,
 Soke thu auswer non but me.
 May lord is servyd at yche messe,
 With xxx kniztes feir and fre;
 I sall say syttyne on the dese,
 I toke thy speeche beyonde the le.
 Thomas stode as still as stone,
 And beheld that ladye gaye;
 Than was sche fayr and ryche auone,
 And also ryal on hir palfreye.
 The grewhondes had fylde them on the dere
 The ratches coupled by my fay,
 She blewe her horn Thomas to chere
 To the castle she went her way.
 The lady into the hall went,
 Thomas followyd at her hand;
 Thar kept hyr mony a lady gent,
 With curtasy and lawe.
 Harp and fedyl both he fande,
 The getheru and the sawtry,
 Lut and ryth and ron gang,
 Thair was al maner of mynstralsy.
 The most fertyly that Thomas thoght,
 When he com emyddes the flore,
 Fourty hertes to quarry were broght,
 That had been bere both long and store.
 Lymon by lappyng blyde,
 And koker standing with dresyng knife,
 And dresyn dere as thair wode.
 And well was thair wonder.
 Knyghtes dansyd by two and thre.
 All that leue long day.

Ladyes that were gret of gre,
 Sat and sang of rych aray.
 Thomas sawe much more in that place,
 Than I can descryve,
 Till on a day alas, alas,
 My lovelye ladye sayd to me,
 Busk ye, Thomas, you must agayn,
 Here you may no longer be;
 Hy then zerue that you were at hame,
 I sal be bryng to Eldyn Tre.
 Thomas answerd with heuy cher,
 And sayd, lowely ladye, lat ma be,
 For I say ye certainly here
 Haf I be bot the space of dayes thre,
 Sothly, Thomas, as I telle ye,
 You hath been here thre yeres,
 And here you may no longer be;
 And I sal tele ye a skole,
 To-morrowe of helle ye foule fende
 Among our folke shall chuse his fee;
 For you art a larg man and an hende,
 Trowe you wele he will chuse thee.
 Fore all the golde that may be,
 Sal you not be betrayed for me,
 And thairfor sal you hens wend.
 She broght him euyn to Eldyn Tre,
 Under nethe the grene wode spray,
 In Huntla bankes was faye to be,
 Ther breddes syng both nyzt and day
 Ferre ouyr you montayn gray,
 Thers hathe my facon;
 Fare wele, Thomas, wende my way.

[The elfin queen, after restoring Thomas to earth, pours forth
 a string of prophecies, in which we distinguish references to the
 events and personages of the Scottish wars of Edward III. The

Battles of Duplin and Halidon are mentioned, and also Black Agnes, Countess of Dunbar. There is a copy of this poem in the Museum in the Cathedral of Lincoln, another in the collection of Peterborough, but unfortunately they are all in an imperfect state. Mr Jamieson, in his curious collection of Scottish ballads and Songs, has an entire copy of this ancient poem with all the collations. The lacuna of the former edition have been supplied from his copy.]

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART SECOND.

ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECY

THE prophecies, ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoun, have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance "amongst the sons of his people." The author of *Sir Tristrem* would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, "Clerk of Tranent, who wrote the adventures of *Schir Gawain*," if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazzaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Ercildoun to the prophetic character. Perhaps, indeed, he himself affected it during his life. We know at least, for certain, that a belief in his supernatural knowledge was current soon after his death. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Wintoun, and by Henry the Minstrel, or *Blind Harry*, as he is usually termed. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate historically his having predicted the events of which they speak.

The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him, which is now extant, is quoted by Mr Pinkerton from a MS. It is supposed to be a response from Thomas of Erildoun, to a question from the heroic Countess of March, renowned for the defence of the castle of Dunbar against the English, and termed, in the familiar dialect of her time, *Black Agnes of Dunbar*. This prophecy is remarkable, in so far as it bears very little resemblance to any verses published in the printed copy of the Rhymer's supposed prophecies. The verses are as follows:

*« La Countesse de Dunbar demande a Thomas de Lysedoun quant
la bataille de Dunbar seroit fin. Et il la respondit et dyt*

• When man is mad a kyng or a capped man,
When man is levere ither mones thyng than is owen
When londe thouys forest, ant forest is felde,
When haies kendles o' the her'ston,
When Wytt and Wille werres togedere
When mon makes stabels of kyrkes, and steles castels with sty,
When Rokesborough nys no burgh ant market is at Liorwyle,
When Rimbourne is dange with dede men,
When men ledes man in to buyen and to sellen,
When a quarter of waty wheet is chaunged for a colt of ten
markes,
When prude (pride) prikes and pees is leyd in prisoun,
When a Scot ne hym hude ase hare in forme that the English
ne shall hym fynde,
When rytch and wronge astente is togedere
When laddes weddeth lovedies;
When Scottes sen so faste, that for wante of shep, hy droweth
himself,
When shal this be?
Nouthir in thine tyme ne in mine,

Wha men int one
Withune twa cuty winter ant one *

*Pinkerton's Poems, from Maitland's MSS quoting
from Hart, Lib. 2253 F*

As I have never seen the MS. from which Mr Pinkerton makes this extract, and as the date of it is fixed by him (certainly one of the most able antiquaries of our age), to the reign of Edward I. or II., it is with great diffidence that I hazard a contrary opinion. There can, however, I believe, be little doubt, that these prophetic verses are a forgery, and not the production of our Thomas the Rhymist. But I am inclined to believe them of a later date, the reign of Edward I. or II.

The gallant defence of the castle of Dunbar, by Black Agnes, took place in the year 1337. The Rhymist died previous to the year 1299 (see the charter, by his son, in the introduction to the foregoing ballad). It seems, therefore, very improbable, that the Countess of Dunbar could ever have an opportunity of consulting Thomas the Rhymist, since that would infer that she was married, or at least engaged in state matters, previous to 1299, whereas, she is described as a young, or a middle-aged woman, at the period of her being besieged in the fortress, which she so well defended. If the editor might indulge a conjecture, he would suppose, that the prophecy was contrived for the encouragement of the English invaders, during the Scottish wars, and that the names of the Countess of Dunbar, and of Thomas of Erildoun, were used

for the greater credit of the forgery. According to this hypothesis, it seems likely to have been composed after the siege of Dunbar, which had made the name of the countess well known, and consequently in the reign of Edward III. The whole tendency of the prophecy is to aver, "that there shall be no end of the Scottish war (concerning which the question was proposed), till a final conquest of the country by England, attended by all the usual severities of war. When the cultivated country shall become forest—says the prophecy—when the wild animals shall inhabit the abode of men;—When Scots shall not be able to escape the English, should they crouch as hares in their form"—all these denunciations seem to refer to the time of Edward III. upon whose victories the prediction was probably founded. The mention of the exchange betwixt a colt worth ten marks, and a quarter of "whaty (indifferent) wheat," seems to allude to the dreadful famine about the year 1388. The independence of Scotland was, however, as impregnable to the ~~mines~~ mines of superstition, as to the steel of our more powerful and more wealthy neighbours. The war of Scotland is, thank God, at an end; but it is ended without her people having either crouched like hares in their form, or being drowned in their flight "for faute of ships,"—thank God for that too. The prophecy, quoted in p. 6, is probably of the same date, and intended for the same purpose. A minute search of the records of the time would, probably, throw additional light upon the allusions contained in these ancient legends. Among

various rhymes of prophetic import, which are at this day current amongst the people of Teviotdale, is one supposed to be pronounced by Thomas the Rhymer, presaging the destruction of his habitation and family

The hare sall kittle (litter) on my hearth-stane,
And there will never be a laud Learmont again

The first of these lines is obviously borrowed from that in the MS. of the Harl. Library. — "When hares
kendles o' the her'stane"—an emphatic image of desolation. It is also inaccurately quoted in the prophecy of Waldhave, published by Andro Hart, 1613

This is a true talking that Thomas of tells,
The hare shall hurple on the hard (hearth) stane

Spottiswoode, an honest, but credulous historian, seems to have been a firm believer in the authenticity of the prophetic wares, vended in the name of Thomas of Ercildoun. "The prophecies, yet extant in Scottish rhymes, whereupon he was commonly called *Thomas the Rhymer*, may justly be admired; having foretold, so many ages before, the union of England and Scotland in the ninth degree of the Bruce's blood, with the succession of Bruce himself to the crown, being yet a child, and other divers particulars, which the event hath ratified and made good Boethius, in his story, relateth his prediction of King Alexander's death, and that he did

foretel the same to the Earl of March, the day before it fell out; saying, 'That before the next day at noon, such a tempest should blow, as Scotland had not felt for many years before.' The next morning, the day being clear, and no change appearing in the air, the nobleman did challenge Thomas of his saying, calling him an impostor. He replied, that noon was not yet passed. About which time, a post came to advertise the earl, of the king's sudden death. 'Then,' said Thomas, 'this is the tempest I foretold; and so shall it prove to Scotland.' Whence, or how, he had this knowledge, can hardly be affirmed; but sure it is that he did divine and answer truly of many things to come.—*Spottiswoode*, p. 47. Besides that notable voucher, Master Hector Boece, the good archbishop might, had he been so minded, have referred to Fordun for the prophecy of King Alexander's death. That historian calls our bard *crualas ill naves*.—*Fordun*, lib. x. cap. 40.

What Spottiswoode calls «the prophecies extant in Scottish rhyme,» are the metrical predictions ascribed to the prophet of Ercildoun, which, with many other compositions of the same nature, bearing the names of Bede Merlin, Gildas, and other approved soothsayers, are contained in one small volume, published by Andro Hart, at Edinburgh, 1615. The late excellent Lord Hailes made these compositions the subject of a dissertation, published in his *Remarks on the History of Scotland*. His attention is chiefly directed to the celebrated prophecy of our bards, mentioned by Bishop Spottiswoode, bear

ing, that the crowns of England and Scotland should be united in the person of a king, son of a French queen, and related to Bruce in the ninth degree. Lord Hailes plainly proves, that this prophecy is perverted from its original purpose, in order to apply it to the succession of James VI. The groundwork of the forgery is to be found in the prophecies of Berlington, contained in the same collection, and runs thus

Of Bruce's left side shall spring out as a brife
 As nere is the ninth degree
 And shall be fleemed of faire Scotland,
 In France fure beyond the sea
 And then shall come againe ryding,
 With eyes that many men may see
 At which he shall light,
 With hempen helmes and horse of tree

It was if it happen for to fall,
 The lyon shal be lord of all,
 The French queen shal beare the soune
 Shal rule all Brittain to the sea,
 And from the Bruce's blood shal come also,
 As nere as the ninth degree

Yet shal there come a keep^e knight over the salt sea
 A keene man of courage and bold man of armes,
 A duke's son dowbled (i.e. dubbed), a borne man in France
 That shal our muths augment, and mend all our harmes
 After the date of our lord 1513, and thre^e thre^e thereafter
 Which shal brooke all the broad isle to himself,
 Between 13 and thre^e thre^e the threip shal be ended
 The axons sill never recover after

There cannot be any doubt, that this prophecy was intended to excite the confidence of the Scottish nation in the Duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, who arrived from France in 1515, two years after the death of James IV. in the fatal field of Flodden. The regent was descended ~~by the male~~ by the left, *i. e.* by the female side, with ~~the~~ ninth degree. His mother was daughter to the Earl of Boulogne, his father banished from ~~the~~ country—"Sectmit of fair Scotland." His arrival must necessarily be by sea, and his landing was expected at Aberlady, in the Frith of Forth. He was a duke's son, dubbed knight and nine years from 1513, are allowed him, by the pretended prophet, for the accomplishment of the salvation of his country, and the exaltation of Scotland over her sister and rival. All this was a pious fraud, to excite the confidence and spirit of the country.

The prophecy, put in the name of our Thomas the Rhymer, as it stands in Hart's book, refers to a later period. The narrator meets the Rhymer upon a land, beside a lee, who shows him many emblematical visions, described in no mean strain of poetry. They chiefly relate to the fields of Flodden and Pinkie, to the national distress which followed these defeats, and to future halcyon days, which are promised to Scotland. One quotation or two will be sufficient to establish this fully:

Our Scottish king sal come ful keene,
 The red lyon beareth he;
 A feddered arrow sharp, I weene,
 Shal make him winke and waille to see

Out of the field he shal be led
 When he is bludie and woe for blood;
 Yet to his men shall he say,
 " For God's luv, turn you againe,
 And give yon southerne folk a frey !
 Why should I lose the right is mine ?
 My date is not to die this day." —

¹Who can doubt for a moment, that this refers to the battle of Flodden, and to the popular reports concerning the doubtful fate of James IV? Allusion is immediately afterwards made to the death of George Douglas, heir apparent of Angus, who fought and fell with his sovereign :

The sternes three that day shall die,
 That beare the harte in silver sheen

The well-known arms of the Douglas family, are the heart and three stars. In another place, the battle of Pinkie is expressly mentioned by name

At Pinken Cluch there shall be spilt
 Much gentle blood that day;
 There shall the bear lose the guilt,
 And the eagill bear it away.

To the end of all this allegorical and mystical rhapsody is interpolated, in the later edition by Andrew Hart, a new edition of *Berlington's* verses, before quoted, altered and manufactured so as to bear reference to the accession of James VI, which had just then taken place. The insertion is made, with a peculiar degree of awkwardness, betwixt a

question put by the narrator, concerning the name and abode of the person who showed him these strange matters, and the answer of the prophet to that question

• Then to the Bairne could I say,
 Where dwells thou, or in what countree?
 [Or] who shall rule the isle of Britaine,
 From the north to the southen sea?
 A French-queene shall beare the sonne,
 Shall rule all Britane to the sea.
 Which of the Bruce's blood shall come,
 As neere as the mist degree.
 I feared fast what was his name,
 Whence that he came, from what country }
 In Eskingtohn I dwell at hame,
 Thomas Rymour men calls me •

There is surely no one, who will not conclude with Lord Hailes, that the eight lines, inclosed in brackets, are a clumsy interpolation, borrowed from Berlington, with such alterations as might render the supposed prophecy applicable to the union of the crowns.

While we are on this subject, it may be proper briefly to notice the scope of some of the other predictions in *Har's collection*. As the prophecy of Berlington, was intended to raise the spirits of the nation, during the reign of Albany, so those of Sybilla and Thomas relate to that of the Earl of Ardan, afterwards Duke of Albany, during the minority of James, a period of similar calamity. This is obvious from the following verses:

Take a thousand in calculation,
 And the longest of the Lyon,
 Four crescents under one crown,
 With Saint Andrew's cross thirse,
 Then threescore and thirse three
 Take tent to Merling truly,
 Then shall the warres ended be,
 And never againe rise
 In that yere there shall a King,
 A duke, and no crowned king,
 Becaus the prince shall be yong,
 And tender of yeares

The date, above hinted at, seems to be 1549, when the Scottish regent, by means of some succours derived from France, was endeavouring to repair the consequences of the fatal battle of Pinkie. Allusion is made to the supply given to the "Moldwarte (England) by the fained hart" (the Earl of Angus). The regent is described by his bearing the antelope, large supplies are promised from France, and complete conquest predicted to Scotland and her allies. Thus was the same blackneyed stratagem repeated, whenever the interest of the rulers appeared to stand in need of it. The regent was not, indeed, till after this period, created Duke of Chatellerault; but that honour was the object of his hopes and expectations.

The name of our renowned soothsayer is liberally used as an authority, throughout all the prophecies published by Andro Hart. Besides those expressly put in his name, Gildas, another assumed personage, is supposed to derive his knowledge from him; for he concludes thus:

« Thus Thomas me told in a troublesome time
In a harvest morn at Eldoun hills »

The Prophecy of Gildas

In the prophecy of Berlington, already quoted, we are told,

« Marvellous Merling, that many men of tells,
And Thomas's sayings comes all at once »

While I am upon the subject of these prophecies, may I be permitted to call the attention of antiquaries to Merdwynn Wyllt, or *Merlin the Wild*, in whose name, and by no means in that of Ambrose Merlin, the friend of Arthur, the Scottish prophecies are issued. That this personage resided at Dummelmzier, and roamed, like a second Nebuchadnezzar in the woods of Tweeddale, in remorse for the death of his nephew, we learn from Fordun. In the *Scotichronicon*, lib. 3, cap. 31, is an account of an interview betwixt St Kentigern and Merlin, then in this distracted and miserable state. He is said to have been called *Lailoken*, from his mode of life. On being commanded by the saint to give an account of himself, he says, that the penance which he performs was imposed on him by a voice from heaven, during a bloody contest betwixt Lidel and Carwanolaw, of which battle he had been the cause. According to his own prediction, he perished at once by fire, earth, and water; for, being pursued with stones by the rustics, he fell from a rock into the river Tweed, and was transfixt by a sharp stake,

fixed there for the purpose of extending a fishing-net

*« Sude perfossus, lapide percussus et unda
Hæc tria Merlinum fertur inire necem,
Sicque ruit, mersusque fuit lignoque pendit,
Lt fecit vatem per terna paricula verum »*

But, in a metrical history of Merlin of Caledonia, compiled by Geoffrey of Monmouth; from the traditions of the Welch bards, this mode of death is attributed to a page, whom Merlin's sister, desirous to convict the prophet of falsehood, because he had betrayed her intrigues, introduced to him, under three various disguises, enquiring each time in what manner the person should die. To the first demand Merlin answered, the party should perish by a fall from a rock; to the second, that he should die by a tree, and, to the third, that he should be drowned. The youth perished, while hunting, in the mode imputed by Foidun to Merlin himself.

Foidun, contrary to the Welch authorities, confounds this person with the Merlin of Arthur; but concludes by informing us, that many believed him to be a different person. The grave of Merlin is pointed out at Drummelziar, in Tweeddale, beneath an aged thorn-tree. On the east side of the church-yard, the brook, called Pausayl, falls into the Tweed; and the following prophecy is said to have been current concerning their union:

*When Tweed and Pausayl join at Merlin's grave,
Scotland and England shall one monarch have.*

On the day of the coronation of James VI., the Tweed accordingly overflowed, and joined the Pausayl at the prophet's grave.—PENNYCUICK'S *History of Tweeddale*, p. 26. These circumstances would seem to infer a communication betwixt the south-west of Scotland and Wales, of a nature peculiarly intimate, for I presume that Merlin would retain sense enough to chuse, for the scene of his wanderings, a country having a language and manners similar to his own.

Be this as it may, the memory of Merlin Sylvester, or the Wild, was fresh among the Scots during the reign of James V. Waldhawe,¹ under whose name a set of prophecies was published, describes himself as lying upon Lomond Law; he hears a voice, which bids him stand to his defence; he looks around, and beholds a flock of hares and foxes² pursued over

¹ I do not know whether the person here meant be Waldhawe, an abbot of Melrose, who died in the odour of sanctity about 1160.

² The strange occupation, in which Waldhawe beholds Merlin engaged, derives some illustration from a curious passage in Geoffrey of Monmouth's life of Merlin, above quoted. The poem, after narrating that the prophet had fled to the forest in a state of distraction, proceeds to mention, that, looking upon the stars one clear evening, he discerned, from his astrological knowledge, that his wife, Guendolen, had resolved, upon the next morning, to take another husband. As he had promised her that this would happen, and had promised her a nuptial gift (cautioning her, however, to keep the bridegroom out of his sight), he now resolved to make good his word. Accordingly, he collected all the stags and lesser game in his neighbourhood and, having fastened himself on a buck, drove the herd before him to the capital of Cumberland, where Guendolen resided.

the mountain by a savage figure, to whom he can hardly give the name of man. At the sight of Wald-have, the apparition leaves the objects of his pur-

But her lover's curiosity, leading him to inspect too nearly this extraordinary cavalcade, Merlin's rage was awakened, and he showed him, with a stroke of an author of the stag, the original runs thus

«Dixerat et silvas et saltus circuit omnes,
Cervorumque greges agmen collegit in unum,
Et damas, capreasque simul, cervoque recessit,
Et veniente die, compellens agmina praese,
Istestans vadit quo habuit Guendolana.
Postquam venit ed, patienter coegit
Cervos ante fores, proclamans, 'Guendolana,
'Guendolana, veni, te talia munera spectant
Oculus ergo venit subidens Guendolana,
Gestaturque vultu cervo miratur, et illum
Sic parere viro, tantum quoque posse ferarum
Nulli numerum quas praese solus agebat,
Sicut pastor oves, quas ducere suevit ad herbis
Stabit ab excelsa sponsus spectando sinistra
In solio mirans equitem, risumque movebat
Ast ubi vidit eum vates, amaroque quis esset,
Cecidit, extemplo divulsit corona cervo,
Quo gestabatur, vibrataque jecit in illum
It caput illius penitus contrivit, enoque
Reddidit exanimem, vitamque fugavit in auras,
Oculus inde super, talorum verberis, ceruam
Diffugiens egit, silvasque redire paravit »

For a perusal of this curious poem, accurately copied from a MS. in the Cotton Library, nearly coeval with the author, I was indebted to my learned friend, the late Mr. Rieu. There is an excellent paraphrase of it in the curious and entertaining *Symon's of Early English Romances*, published by Mr. Ellis

suit, and assaults him with a club. Waldhave defends himself with his sword, throws the savage to the earth, and refuses to let him arise, till he swears by the law and lead he lives upon, "to do him no harm." This done, he permits him to arise and marvels at his strange appearance :

• He was formed like a treike (man) all his four quarters
And then his chin and his face haired so thick,
With haire growing so grime, fearful to see

He answers briefly to Waldhave's enquiry concerning his name and nature, that he "drees his weird," i. e. does penance, in that wood; and having hinted that questions as to his own state are offensive, he pours forth an obscure rhapsody concerning futurity, and concludes,

• Go musing upon Merling if thou wilt,
For I mean no more man at this time

This is exactly similar to the meeting between Merlin and Kentigern in Fordun. These prophecies of Merlin seem to have been in request in the minority of James V.; for among the amusements with which Sir David Lindsay diverted that prince during his infancy, are

The prophecies of Rhymer, Bede, and Merlin
Sir David Lindsay's Epistle to the King

And find, in Waldhave, at least one allusion to

the very ancient prophecy, addressed to the Countess of Dunbar :

This is a true token that Thomas of tells,
When a ladde with a ladye shall go over the fields.

The original stands thus ;

When laddes weddeth lovedies

Another prophecy of Merlin seems to have been current about the time of the regent Morton's execution.—When that nobleman was committed to the charge of his accuser, Captain James Stewart, newly created Earl of Arran, to be conducted to his trial at Edinburgh, Spottiswoode says that he asked, “ Who was Earl of Arran ? ” and being answered that Captain James was the man, after a short pause he said, ‘ And is it so ? I know then what I may look for ! ’ meaning, as was thought, that the old prophecy of the ‘ Falling of the heart ’ by the mouth of Arran, should then be fulfilled. Whether this was his mind or not, it is not known ; but some spared not, at the time when the Hamiltons were banished, in which business he was held too earnest, to say, that he stood in fear of this prediction, and went that course only to disappoint it. But, if so it was, he did find himself now deluded ; for he fell by the mouth of another Arran than he imagined.”—*Spottiswoode*, p. 313. The

The heart was the cognizance of Morton.

fatal words alluded to, seem to be these in the prophecy of Merlin :

« In the mouth of Arrane a selcouth shall fall,
Two bloodie hearts shall be taken with a false tunc
And derfly dung down without any dome.»

To return from these desultory remarks, into which the editor has been led by the celebrated name of Merlin, the style of all these prophecies, published by Hart, is very much the same. The measure is alliterative, and somewhat similar to that of *Pierce Plowman's Visions* ; a circumstance, which might entitle us to ascribe to some of them an earlier date than the reign of James V., did we not know that *Sir Galloran of Galloway*, and *Gavane and Gologras*, two romances rendered almost unintelligible by the extremity of affected alliteration, are perhaps not prior to that period. Indeed, although we may allow, that during much earlier times, prophecies, under the names of those celebrated soothsayers, have been current in Scotland, yet those published by Hart have obviously been so often vamped and re-vamped to serve the political purposes of different periods, that it may be shrewdly suspected, that, as in the case of Sir John Cutler's transmigrated stockings, very little of the original materials now remains. I cannot refrain from indulging my readers with the publisher's title to the last prophecy ; as it contains certain curious information concerning the Queen of Sheba, who is identified with the Cumatan Sybil : « Here followeth a prophetic, pro-

nounced by a noble queene and matron, called Sybilla, Regina Austri, that came to Solomon. Through the which she compiled four bookes, at the instance and request of the said King Sol, and other divers: and the fourth book was directed to a noble king, called Baldwine, king of the broad isle of Britain; in the which she maketh mention of two noble princes and emperours, the which is called Leones. How these two shall subdue, and overcome all earthlie princes to their diademe and crowne, and also be glorified and crowned in the heaven among saints. The first of these two is Constantinus Magnus; that was Leprosus, the son of Saint Helene, that found the croce. The second is the sixt king of the name of Steward of Scotland, the which is our most noble King." With such editors and commentators, what wonder that the text became unintelligible, even beyond the usual oracular obscurity of prediction?

If there still remain, therefore, among these predictions, any verses having a claim to real antiquity, it seems now impossible to discover them from those which are comparatively modern. Nevertheless, as there are to be found, in these compositions, some uncommonly wild and masculine expressions, the editor has been induced to throw a few passages together, into the sort of ballad to which this disquisition is prefixed. It would, indeed, have been no difficult matter for him, by a judicious selection, to have excited, in favour of Thomas of Ercildoun, a share of the admiration, bestowed by sundry wise persons upon Mass Robert Fleming. For example:

“ But then the lily shall be loused when they least think;
 Then clear king's blood shal quake for fear of death;
 For charls shal chop off heads of their chief heirns,
 And carle of the crowns that Christ hath appointed.

— — — — —
 Thereafter on every side sorrow shal arise;
 The barges of clear barons down shal be sunken;
 Secular shal sit in spiritual seats,
 Occupying offices anointed as they were.*

Taking the lily for the emblem of France, can there be a more plain prophecy of the murder of her monarch, the destruction of her nobility, and the desolation of her hierarchy?

But, without looking farther into the signs of the times, the editor, though the least of all the prophets, cannot help thinking that every true Briton will approve of his application of the last prophecy quoted in the ballad.

Hart's collection of prophecies has been frequently printed within the century, probably to favour the pretensions of the unfortunate family of Stuart. For the prophetic renown of Gildas and Bede, see *Fordun*, lib 3.

Before leaving the subject of Thomas's predictions, it may be noticed, that sundry rhymes, passing for his prophetic effusions, are still current among the vulgar. Thus, he is said to have prophesied of the very ancient family of Haig of Bemerside,

betide, betide, whate'er betide,
 haig shall be Haig of Bemerside.

The grandfather of the present proprietor of Bemerside had twelve daughters, before his lady brought him a male heir. The common people trembled for the credit of their favourite sooth-sayer. The late Mr Haig was at length born, and their belief in the prophecy confirmed beyond a shadow of doubt.

Another memorable prophecy bore, that the Old Kirk of Kelso, constructed out of the ruins of the Abbey, should fall when « at the fullest.» At a very crowded sermon, about thirty years ago, a piece of lime fell from the roof of the church. The alarm, for the fulfilment of the words of the seer, became universal; and happy were they, who were nearest the door of the predestined edifice. The church was in consequence deserted, and has never since had an opportunity of tumbling upon a full congregation. I hope, for the sake of a beautiful specimen of Saxo-Gothic architecture, that the accomplishment of this prophecy is far distant.

Another prediction, ascribed to the Rhymmer, seems to have been founded on that sort of insight into futurity, possessed by most men of a sound and combining judgment. It runs thus :

At Eildon Tree if you shall be,
A brigg ower Tweed you there may see.

The spot in question commands an extensive prospect of the course of the river; and it was easy to foresee, that when the country should become in the least degree improved, a bridge ~~would~~ be somewhere

thrown over the stream. In fact, you now see no less than three bridges from that elevated situation.

Corspatrick (Comes Patrick,) Earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Ercildoun is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of King Alexander's death, the author has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART SECOND.

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream ;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awakened from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong ;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be :
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."
Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave,
And I will show thee curses three,

Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

“A storm shall roar, this very hour,
From Rosse’s Hills to Solway sea.”
“Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea.”

He put his hand on the earlie’s head;
He shew’d him a rock, beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff, beneath his steed,
And steel-dight nobles wiped their e’e.

“The neist curse lights on Branxton Hills:
By Flodden’s high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi’ meikle pride.

“A Scottish king shall come full keen;
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather’d arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

“When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
‘For God’s sake turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.’”

‘King Alexander’; killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.
‘The uncertainty which long prevailed in Scotland concerning the fate of James IV. is well known.

« Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

« There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil blude that day.»

« Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessing show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie,» Corspatricks said,
« Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!»

« The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread;¹
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

« Beside that brigg, out-ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen.
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

« Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree;

¹ One of Thomas's rhymes, preserved by tradition, runs thus:

« The burn of breid
Shall run fow reid.»

Bannock-burn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the name of *bannock* to a thick round cake of unleavened bread.

The raven shall come, the crne shall go,
And drink the Saxon blood sae free.
The cross of stone they shall no know,
So thick the corses there shall be."

"But tell me now," said brave Dunbar,
"True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?"

"A French queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain, to the sea:
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

"The waters worship shall his race,
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride ower ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART THIRD—MODERN.

THOMAS THE RHYMER was renowned among his contemporaries, as the author of the celebrated romance of *Sir Tristrem*. Of this once admired poem only one copy is known to exist, which is in the Advocates' Library. The author, in 1804, published a small edition of this curious work, which, if it does not revive the reputation of the bard of Erceldoun, is at least the earliest specimen of Scottish poetry hitherto published. Some account of this romance has already been given to the world in Mr Ellis's *Specimens of Ancient Poetry*, vol. I. p. 165, 3d. p. 410; a work, to which our predecessors and our posterity are alike obliged; the former, for the preservation of the best selected examples of their poetical taste; and the latter, for a history of the English language, which will only cease to be interesting with the existence of our mother-tongue, and all that genius and learning have recorded in it. It is sufficient here to mention, that, so great was the reputation of the romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that few were thought capable of reciting it after the manner of the author;—a circumstance alluded to by Robert de Brunne, the annalist:

I see in song, in sedgeving tale,
Of Erceldoun, and of Kendal.

Now thame says as they thame wrought,
 And in thare saying it semes nocht,
 That thou may here in Sir Tristrem,
 Over gestes it has the steme,
 Over all that is or was;
 If men it said as made Thômas, etc.

It appears, from a very curious MS. of the thirteenth century, *penes* Mr Douce of London, containing a French metrical romance of *Sir Tristrem*, that the work of our Thomas the Rhymer was known, and referred to, by the minstrels of Normandy and Bretagne. Having arrived at a part of the romance, where reciters were wont to differ in the mode of telling the story, the French bard expressly cites the authority of the poet of *Erceldoun* :

Plusurs de nos granter ne volent,
 Co que del naim dire se solent,
 Ki femme Kaherdin dut aimer,
 Li naim redut Tristran narrer,
 E entusché par grant eugin,
 Quant il afole Kaherdin;
 Pur cest plaic e pur cest mal,
 Enveiad Tristran Guvernal,
 En Engleterre pur Ysolt
 THOMAS ico granter ne volt,
 Et si volt par raisun mostrer,
 Qu'ico ne put pas esteer, etc.

The tale of *Sir Tristrem*, as narrated in the Edinburgh MS., is totally different from the voluminous romance in prose, originally compiled on the same subject by Rusticien de Puisc, and analysed by M. de Tressan; but agrees in every essential particular with the metrical performance just quoted, which is work of much higher antiquity.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a mood of mind we all have known,
On drowsy eve, or dark and low'ring day,
When the tired spirits lose their sprightly tone,
And nought can chase the lingering hours away.
Dull on our soul falls Fancy's dazzling ray,
And Wisdom holds his steadier torch in vain,
Obscured the painting seems, mistuned the lay,
Nor dare we of our listless load complain,
For who for sympathy may seek that cannot tell of
pain?

The jolly sportsman knows such drearihood,
When bursts in deluge the autumnal rain,
Clouding that morn which threatens the heath-cock's
brood;
Of such, in summer's drought the anglers plain,
Who hope the soft mild southern shower in vain;
But, more than all, the discontented fair,
Whom father stern, and sterner aunt, restrain
From county-ball, or race occurring rare,
While all her friends around their vestments gay
prepare.

Ennui!— or, as our mothers call'd thee, Spleen!

To thee we owe full many a rare device;—
Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice,
The turning-lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotch'd pallet thou may'st claim,
Retort, and air-pump, threatening frogs and mice
(Murders disguised by philosophic name),
And much of trifling grave, and much of buxom
game.

Then of the books, through thy drowsy glance
Compiled, what book the catalogue may quote!
Plays, poems, novels, never read but once;—
But not of such the late fair Edgeworth wrote,
That bears thy name, and is thine antidote;
And not of such the strain my Thomson sung,
Delicious dreams inspiring by his note,
What time to Innocence his harp he strung:
Oh! might my lay be rank'd that happier list among!

Each hath his refuge whom thy cares assail.

For me, I love my study-fire to trim,
And con right vacantly some idle tale.

Displaying on the couch each listless limb,
Till on the drowsy page the lights grow dim,
And doubtful slumber half supplies the theme;
While antique shapes of knight and giant grim,
Damsel and dwarf, in long procession gleam,
And the Romancer's tale becomes the Reader's dream.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART THIRD.

WHEN seven years more had come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie ;
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildounc,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall ;
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies laced in pall.

¹ *Ensenzie* — War-cry, or gathering word

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quai¹ghs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done;
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were they all, both limb and tongue,
And harp and envy pale;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might e'er avail²
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The warrior of the lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And died for ladies's sake.

¹ *Quai^{ghs}*—Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.

² See introduction to this Ballad.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd, in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No med'cine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue,
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head;

And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brengwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand :
With agony his heart is wrung ;
O where is Isolde's lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes, she comes! like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly :
She comes, she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath :
The gentlest pair, that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There ~~was~~ used the harp; its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear ;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak,
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's cars assail.

He starts, he wakes :— « What Richard, ho !
Arise, my page, arise !
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies ! »

Then forth they rush'd : by Leader's tide,
A selcouth¹ sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

Beneath the noon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

¹ Selcouth—Wondrous.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as a page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his cloths did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
“My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp he took around,
In minstrel guise he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turned him oft
To view his ancient hall;
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moon-beams fall.

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

“Farewell, my father's ancient tower!
A long farewell,” said he:
“The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

“To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,

And on thy hospitable hearth
The hare shall leave her young.

“Adieu! adieu!” again he cried,
All as he turned him roun’—
“Farewell to Leader’s silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!”

The hart and hind approach’d the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas’ face,
With them he cross’d the flood.

Lord Douglas leap’d on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr’d him the Leader o’er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne’er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

NOTES

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART THIRD.

And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon. P. 51. v. 1.

Ruberslaw and Dunyon are two high hills above Jedburgh.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow.—P. 51. v. 2.

An ancient tower near Ercildoun, belonging to a family of the name of Home. One of Thomas's prophecies is said to have run thus

Vengeance, vengeance! when and where!

On the house of Coldingknow, now and ever mair!

The spot is rendered classical by its having given name to the beautiful melody, called the *Broom o' the Cowdenknows*.

They roused the deer from Caddenhead,

To distant Torwoodlee.—P. 51. v. 3.

Torwoodlee and Caddenhead are places in Selkirkshire

How courteous Gawaine met the wound.—P. 52. v. 6.

See in the *Fabliaux* of Monsieur le Grand, elegantly translated by the late Gregory Way, Esq., the tale of the *Knight and the Sword*.

As white as snow on Fairnalie.—P. 55. v. 5

An ancient seat upon the Tweed, in Selkirkshire. In a popular edition of the first part of Thomas the Rhymer, the fairy queen thus addresses him:

"Gin ye wad meet wi' me again,
Gang to the bonny banks of Fairnalie."

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

A POEM.

IN SIX CANTOS.

'T is thus my malady I well may bear,
Albeit outstretch'd, like Pope's own Paridel,
Upon the rack of a too-easy chair;
And find, to cheat the time, a powerful spell
In old romaunts of errantry that tell,
Or later legends of the Fairy-folk,
Or oriental tale of Afrite fell,
Of Genii, Talisman, and broad-wing'd Roc,
Though taste may blush and frown, and sober reason
mock.

Oft at such season, too, will rhymes unsought,
Arrange themselves in some romantic lay;
The which, as things unfitting graver thought,
Are burnt or blotted on some wiser day.—
These few survive—and proudly let me say,
Court not the critic's smile, nor dread his frown;
They well may serve to while an hour away,
Nor does the volume ask for more renown,
Than Ennui's yawning smile, what time she drops it
down.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIRST.

LIST to the valorous deeds that were done
By Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son !

Count Witikind came off a victor's train,
And roved with his Norsemen o'er the land and the main
Woe to the realms which he sought for there
Was shedding of blood, and murther of men,
Rape of maiden, and laughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast :
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
And he burn'd the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his band to their barks again.

II.

On Erin's shore was his outrage known,
The winds of France had his banners blown ;
Little was there to plunder, yet still
His pirates had foray'd on Scottish hill ;
But upon merry England's coast
More frequently sail'd, for he won the most.

So wide and so far his ravage they knew,
 If a sail but gleam'd white gainst the welkin blue
 Trumpet and bugle to arms did call,
 Buglers hasten'd to man the wall,
 Peasants fled inland his fury to 'scape,
 Beacons were lighted on headland and cape
 Bells were toll'd out, and aye as they rung,
 Fearful and faintly the grey brothers sung,
 « Bless us, St Mary, from flood and from fire,
 From famine and pest, and Count Witikind's ire

He liked the wealth of fair England so well,
 That he sought in her bosom as native to dwell
 He enter'd the Humber at a fearful hour,
 And disembark'd to Danish power.
 Three furs came to meet him with all their train
 Two hath he taken and one hath he slain
 Count Witikind on the Humber's rich strand,
 And he wear'd and war'd in Northumberland
 But the Saxon King was a sterner age,
 Weak in battle, in council sage;
 Peace of that heathen leader he sought,
 Gifts he gave, and quiet he brought;
 And the Count took upon him the peaceable syle,
 Of a vassal and liegeman of Britain's broad isle.

IV.

Time will rust the sharpest sword
 Time will consume the strongest cord
 That which moulders hemp and steel,
 Mortal arm and nerve must feel.

Of the Danish band, whom Count Witikind led,
 Many wou'd aged, and many were dead;
 Himself found his armour full weighty to bear,
 Wrinkled his brows grew, and hoary his hair;
 He leant on a staff, when his step went abroad,
 And patient his palfrey, when steed he bestrode;
 As he grew feebler his wildness ceased,
 He made himself peace with prelate and priest,
 Made his peace, and, stooping his head,
 Patiently listed the counsel they said;
 Saint Cuthbert's bishop wisely and grave.
 Wise and good was the counsel he gave.

V.

Thou hast murder'd, rob'd, and spoil'd,
 Time it is thy poor soul were sold;
 Priest didst thou slay, and churches burn,
 Time it is now to repentance to turn;
 Friends hast thou worship'd, with heathenish rite,
 Leave now the darkness, and wend into light:
 O' while life and space are given,
 Turn thee yet, and think of Heaven!
 That stern old heathen his head he raised,
 And on the good prelate he steadfastly gazed;
 "Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
 My faith I will leave, and I'll cleave unto thine."

VI.

Broad lands he gave him on Tyne and on Wear,
 To be held of the church by battle and spear;
 Part of Monkwearmouth, of Tynedale part,
 To better his will, and to soften his heart:

Count Witikind was a joyful man,
 Less for the faith than the lands that he wan.
 The high church of Durham is dress'd for the day,
 The clergy are ranged in their solemn array;
 There came the Count, in a bear-skin warm,
 Leaning on Hilda his concubine's arm;
 He kneel'd before Saint Cuthbert's shrine,
 With patience unmov'd at rites divine;
 He abjured the gods of his heathen race,
 And he bent his head to the font of grace;
 But such was the grieved proselyte's look,
 That the priest who baptized him grew pale and
 shook;
 And the old monks murmur'd beneath their hood,
 "Of a stem so sprung we can never spring good!"—

VII.

Up then arose the brave Conqueror,
 Homeward he led him, who had the rite;
 The prelate in honour will with him ride,
 And feast in his castle on Tyne's fair side;
 Banners and banderols danced in the wind,
 Monks rode before them, and spearmen behind;
 Onward they pass'd, till fairly did shine
 Pennons and crosses on the bosom of Tyne;
 And full in front did that fortress loar,
 In darksome strength with its buttress and tower;
 At the castle-gate was young Harold there,
 Count Godwin's only offspring and heir.

VIII.

Young Harold was fear'd for his hardihood,
 His strength of frame, and his fury of mood;

Rude he was and wild to behold,
 Wore neither collar nor bracelet of gold,
 Cap of vair, nor rich array,
 Such as should grace that fatal day.
 His doublet of bull's hide was all unbraced,
 Uncover'd his head, and his sandal unlaced:
 His shaggy black locks on his brow hung low,
 And his eyes glanced through them a swarthy glow;
 A Danish club in his hand he bore,
 The spikes were clotted with recent gore;
 At his back a she-wolf, and her wolf-cubs twain,
 In the dangerous chase that morning slain.
 Rude was the greeting his father he made,
 None to the Bishop,—while thus he said:

TH.

“What priest-led hypocrite art thou,
 With thy humbled look and thy down-cast brow,
 Like a shaveling who swears to keep his vow?
 Canst thou be Witliffe the Waster known,
 Royal Harold's fearless son,
 Haughty as Goda's haughtier lord,
 Who won his bride by the axe and sword;
 From the shrine of St Peter the chalice who tore,
 And melted to bracelets for Freya and Thor;
 With the blow of his gauntlet who burst the skull,
 Before Odin's altar, of the Mountain Bull?
 They worship'd with rites that to war-gods belong,
 With the deed of the brave, and the blow of the strong,
 And now, in thine age to dooms sunk,
 Wilt thou patter thy crimes to a shaven monk,
 Lay down thy mail-shirt for clothing of hair,
 Fasting and scourge, like a slave, wilt thou bear?”

Or, at best, be admitted in slothful bower
 To batten with priest and with paramour?
 O! out upon thine endless shame!
 Each Scald's high harp shall blast thy fame,
 And thy son will refuse thee a father's name!—

X.

Ireful wax'd old Wiskind's look,
 His faltering voice with fury shook; —
 "Hear me, Harold, of harden'd heart!
 Stubborn and wilful ever thou wert.
 Thine outrage insane I command thee to cease,
 Fear my wrath and remain at peace:—
 Just is the debt of repentance I've paid,
 Richly the church has a recompence made,
 And the truth of her doctrines I prove with my blade.
 But reckoning to none of my actions I owe,
 And least to my son such accounting will show.
 Why speak I to thee of repentance or truth,
 Who ne'er from thy childhood knew reason or ruth?
 Hence! to the wolf and the bear in her den;
 These are thy mates, and not rational men.—

XI.

Grimly smiled Harold, and coldly replied,
 "We must honour our sires, if we fear when they
 chide.

For me, I am yet what thy lessons have made,
 I was reed'd in a buckler and fed from a blade:
 An infant, was taught to clap hands and to shout,
 From the roofs of the tower when the flame had
 broke out;

In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip,
 And tinge with its purple my cheek and my lip.—
 'Tis thou know'st not truth, that has barter'd in eld,
 For a price, the brave faith that thine ancestors held.
 When this wolf—and the carcase he flung on the
 plain—

« Shall awake and give food to her nurslings again,
 The face of his father will Harold review;
 Till then, aged Heathen, young Christian, adieu!»

XII.

Priest, monk, and prelate stood aghast,
 As through the pageant the heathen pass'd.
 A cross-bearer out of his saddle he flung,
 Laid his hand on the pommel and into it sprung;
 Loud was the shriek, and deep the groan,
 When the holy sign on the earth was thrown!
 The fierce old Count unsheathed his brand,
 But the calmer Prelate stay'd his hand;
 « Let him pass free!—Heaven knows its hour,—
 But he must own repentance's power,
 Pray and weep, and penance bear,
 Ere he hold land by the Tyne and the Wear.»—
 Thus in scorn and in wrath from his father is gone
 Young Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XIII.

High was the feasting in Witikind's hall,
 Rejoicing priests, soldiers, and pagans, and all;
 And e'en the good Bishop was fain to endure
 The scandal which time and instruction might cure:

It were dangerous, he deem'd, at the first to restrain,
 In his wine and his wassail, a half-christen'd Dane.
 The mead flow'd around, and the ale was drain'd dry.
 Wild was the laughter, the song, and the cry;
 With Kyrie Eleison came clamorously in
 The war-songs of Dancesman, Norwegian, and Finn,
 Till man after man the contention gave o'er,
 Outstretch'd on the rushes that strew'd the hall floor;
 And the tempest within, having ceased its wild rout,
 Gave place to the tempest that thunder'd without.

XIV.

Apart from the wassail, in turret alone,
 Lay flaxen-hair'd Gunnar, old Ermenegarde's son;
 In the train of Lord Harold the page was the first,
 For Harold in childhood had Ermenegarde nursed;
 And grieved was young Gunnar his master should
 roam,
 Unhoused and unfriended, an exile from home.
 He heard the deep thunder, the plashing of rain.
 He saw the red lightning through shot-hole and pane:
 «And oh!» said the page, «on the shelterless wold
 Lord Harold is wandering in darkness and cold!
 What though he was stubborn, and wayward, and
 wild,
 He ~~ex~~ loved me because I was Ermenegarde's child,
 And often from dawn till the set of the sun,
 In the chase, by his stirrup, ~~there~~ I run:
 I would I were older and knighthood could I wear,
 I would soon quit the banks of the Tyne and the Wear
 For my mother's command with her last parting
 breath,
 Bade me follow her nursling in life and to death.

XV.

„It pours and it thunders, it lightens amain,
 As if Lok, the Destroyer, had burst from his chain!
 Accursed by the church, and expell'd by his sire,
 Nor Christian nor Dane give him shelter or fire,
 And this tempest what mortal may houseless endure?
 Unaided, unmantled, he dies on the moor!
 What'e'er comes of Gunnar he tarries not here.”
 He leapt from his couch and he grasp'd to his spear,
 Sought the hall of the feast. Undisturb'd by his tread,
 The wa'sailers slept fast as the sleep of the dead:
 „Ungrateful and bestial!” his anger broke forth,
 „To forget mid your goblets the pride of the North!
 And you ye cow'd priests, who have plenty in store,
 Must go—Gunnar for ransom a palfrey and ore.”—

XVI.

Then— a full little of ban or of curse,
 He h— on the Prior of Jorvaux's purse:
 Saint sac— It's Abbot next morning has miss'd
 His madd— fur'd from the cape to the wrist:
 The sen— keys from his belt he has ta'en
 Well c— on that eve was old Hildebrand's
 brain).

To the stable-y— he made his way,
 And mou—ed th— Bishop's palfrey gay,
 Casle and hamlet behind— has cast,
 And right c— his way to the moorland has pass'd.
 Sore—orted the palfrey, unused to face
 A weather so wild at so rash a pace;
 So long he snorted, so loud he neigh'd,
 There answer'd a steed that was bound beside,

And the red flash of lightning show'd there where lay
His master, Lord Harold, outstretch'd on the clay.

XVII.

Up he started, and thunder'd out, «Stand!»
And raised the club in his deadly hand.
The flaxen-hair'd Gunnar his purpose told,
Shew'd the palfrey and proffer'd the gold.
«Back, back, and home, thou simple boy!
Thou canst not share my grief or joy.
Have I not mark'd thee wail and cry
When thou hast seen a sparrow die?
And canst thou, as my follower should,
Wade ankle deep through foeman's blood,
Dare mortal and immortal foe,
The gods above, the fiends below,
And man on earth, more hateful still,
The very fountain-head of ill?
Desperate of life, and careless of death,
Lover of bloodshed, and slaughter, and scathe,
Such must thou be with me to roam,
And such thou canst not be—back, and home!»—

XVIII.

Young Gunnar shook like an aspen bough,
As he ~~tried~~ ^{heard} the harsh voice and beheld the dark brow,
And half he ~~repented his purpose and vow.~~
But now to draw back were bootless ~~stare,~~
And he loved his master, so urged his claim:
«Alas! if my arm and my courage be weak,
Bear with me a while for old Ermengarde's sake:

Nor deem so lightly of Gunnar's faith,
As to fear he would break it for peril of death.
Have I not risk'd it to fetch thee this gold,
This surcoat and mantle to fence thee from cold?
And, did I bear a baser mind,
What lot remains if I stay behind?
The priests' revenge, thy father's wrath,
A dungeon and a shameful death." —

XIX.

With gentler look Lord Harold eyed
The page, then turn'd his head aside;
And either a tear did his eye-lash stain,
Or it caught a drop of the passing rain.
"Art thou an outcast then?" quoth he,
"The meeter page to follow me."
"T were bootless to tell what crimes they sought,
Ventures achieved, and battles fought;
How oft with few, how oft alone,
Fierce Harold's arm the field hath won.
Men swore his eye, that flash'd so red
When each other glance was quench'd with dread,
Bore oft a light of deadly flame
That ne'er from mortal courage came.
Those limbs so strong, that mood so stern,
That loved the couch of heath and fern,
Afar from hamlet, town, and town,
More than to rest on driven down;
Thy stubborn frame, that sullen mood,
Men deem'd must come of aught but good;
And they whisper'd, the great Master Fiend was at one
With Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XX.

Years after years had gone and fled,
 The good old Prelate lies lapp'd in lead;
 In the chapel still is shown
 His sculptured form on a marble stone,
 With staff and ring and scapulaire,
 And folded hands in the act of prayer.
 Saint Cuthbert's mitre is resting now
 On the haughty Saxon, bold Aldingar's brow;
 The power of his crozier he loved to extend
 O'er whatever would break or whatever would bend.
 And now hath he clothed him in cope and in pall,
 And the Chapter of Durham has met at his call.
 « And hear ye not, brethren,» the proud Bishop said,
 « That our vassal, the Danish Count Witikind, 's dead?
 All his gold and his goods hath he given
 To holy church for the love of Heaven,
 And hath founded a chantry with stipend and dole,
 That priests and that beadsmen may pray for his soul.
 Harold his son is wandering abroad,
 Dreaded by man and abhorred by God;
 Meet it is not, that such should heir
 The lands of the church on the Tyne and the Wear;
 And at her pleasure, her hallow'd hands
 May now resume these wealthy lands.»—

XXI.

Answer'd good Eustace, a canon old,
 « Harold is tameless, and furious, and bold;
 Ever renown blows a note of fame,
 And a note of fear, when she sounds his name

Much of bloodshed and much of scathe
Have been their lot who have waked his wrath.
Leave him these lands and lordships still,
Heaven in its hour may change his will;
But if left of gold, and of living bare,
An evil counsellor is despair."—
More had he said, but the Prelate frown'd,
And murmur'd his brethren who sate around,
And with one consent have they given their doom,
That the church should the lands of Saint Cuthbert
 resume.
So will'd the Prelate; and canon and dean
Gave to his judgment their loud amen.]

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

'T is merry in greenwood, thus runs the old lay,
In the gladsome month of lively May,
When the wild birds' song on stem and spray
 Invites to forest bower ;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beech in glistening leaves is dress'd,
And dark between shews the oak's proud breast,
 Like a chieftain's frowning tower ;
Though a thousand branches join their screen,
Yet the broken sun-beams glance between,
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
 With brighter tints the flower :
Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wild-wood glen,
Where roe and red deer find sheltering den,
 When the sun is in his power.

II.

Less merry, perchance, is the fading leaf
That follows so soon on the gather'd sheaf,

More fear'd when in wrath she laugh'd;
For then, 't was said, more fatal true
To its dread aim her spell-glance flew,
Than when from Wulfstane's bended yew
Sprung forth the grey-goose shaft.

IV.

Yet had this fierce and dreaded pair,
So Heaven decreed, a daughter fair;
None brighter crown'd the bed,
In Britain's bounds, of peer or prince,
Nor hath, perchance, a lovelier since
In this fair isle been bred.
And nought of fraud, or ire, or ill,
Was known to gentle Metelill,
A simple maiden she;
The spells in dimpled smiles that lie,
And a downcast blush, and the darts that fly
With the sidelong glance of a hazel eye,
Were her arms and witchery.
So young, so simple was she yet,
She scarce could childhood's joys forget,
And still she loved, in secret set
Beneath the greenwood tree,
To plait the rushy coronet,
And braid with flowers her locks of jet,
As when, in fancy;—
Yet could that heart, so simple, prove
The early dawn of stealing love:
Ah! gentle maid, beware!
The power who, now so mild a guest,
Gives dangerous yet delicious zest

To the calm pleasures of thy breast,
 Will soon, a tyrant o'er the rest,
 Let none his empire share.

V.

One morn, in kirtle green array'd,
 Deep in the wood the maiden stray'd,
 And, where a fountain sprung,
 She sate her down, unseen, to thread
 The scarlet berry's mimic braid,
 And while her beads she strung,
 Like the blithe lark, whose carol gay
 Gives a good-morrow to the day,
 So lightsomely she sung.

VI.

SONG.

LORD WILLIAM was born in gilded bower,
 The heir of Wilton's lofty tower ;
 Yet better loves Lord William now
 To roam beneath wild Rookhope's brow ;
 And William has lived where ladies fair
 With gauds and jewels deck their hair,
 Yet better loves the dew-drops still
 That pearl the locks of Metelill.

~~"The pious Palmer loves, I wis,~~
 Saint Cuthbert's hallow'd beads to kiss ;
 But I, though simple girl I be,
 Might have such homage paid to me ;
 For did Lord William see me suit
 This necklace of the bramble's fruit,

He fain—but must not have his will,—
Would kiss the beads of Metelill.

«My nurse has told me many a tale,
How vows of love are weak and frail;
My mother says that courtly youth
By rustic maid means seldom sooth.
What should they mean? it cannot be,
That such a warning's meant for me,
For nought—oh! nought of fraud or ill
'Can William mean to Metelill!»—

VII.

Sudden she stops—and starts to feel
A weighty hand, a glove of steel,
Upon her shrinking shoulders laid;
Fearful she turn'd, and saw, dismay'd,
A knight in plate and mail array'd,
His crest and bearing worn and fray'd,

His surcoat soil'd and riven;
Form'd like that giant race of yore,
Whose long-continued crimes out-wore
The sufferance of Heaven.

Stern accents made his pleasure known,
Though then he used his gentlest tone:
«Maiden,» he said, «sing forth thy glee;
Start not—sing on—it pleases me.»

VIII.

Secured within his powerful hold,
To bend her knee, her hands to fold,
Was all the maiden might;
And «Oh! forgive,» she faintly said,
«The terrors of a simple maid,
If thou art mortal wight!

But if—of such strange tales are told,—
 Uncarthy warrior of the wold,
 Thou comest to chide mine accents bold,
 My mother, Jutta, knows the spell,
 At noon and midnight pleasing well
 The disembodied ear;
 Oh! let her powerful charms atone
 For aught my rashness may have done,
 And cease thy grasp of fear.»
 Then laughed the knight—his laughter's sound
 Half in the hollow helmet drown'd;
 His barred vizor then he raised,
 And steady on the maiden gazed.
 He smooth'd his brows, as best he might,
 To the dread calm of autumn night,
 When sinks the tempest's roar;
 Yet still the cautious fisher's eye
 The clouds, and fear the gloomy sky,
 And haul their barks on shore.

IX.

«Damsel,» he said, «be wise, and learn
 Matters of weight and deep concern:
 From distant realms I come,
 And, wanderer long, at length have plann'd
 In this my native Northern land
 To seek myself a home.
 Nor that alone—a mate I seek;
 She must be gentle, soft and meek,—
 No lordly dame for me;
 Myself am something rough of mood,
 And feel the fire of royal blood,
 And therefore do not hold it good

'To match in my degree.
 Then, since coy maidens say my face
 Is harsh, my form devoid of grace,
 For a fair lineage to provide,
 'Tis meet that my selected bride
 In lineaments be fair;
 I love thine well—till now I ne'er
 Look'd patient on a face of fear,
 but now that tremulous sob and tear
 Become thy beauty rare.
 One kiss—nay, damsel, coy it not :
 And now go seek thy parents' cot,
 And say, a bridegroom soon I come,
 To woo my love and bear her home."

X.

Home sprung the maid without a pause,
 As leveret 'scaped from greyhound's jaws;
 But still she lock'd, how'er distress'd,
The secret in her boding breast;
 Dreading her sire, who oft forbade
 Her steps should stray to distant glade.
 Night came—to her accustom'd nook
 Her distaff aged Jutta took,
 And by the lamp's imperfect glow,
 Rough Wulfstane trimm'd his shafts and bow.
 Sudden and clamorous, from the ground
 Upstart'd slumbering brach and hound;
 Loud knocking next the lodge alarms,
 And Wulfstane snatches at his arms.
 When opening flew the yielding door,
 And that grim warrior press'd the floor.

XI.

"All peace be here—What! none replies?
 Dismiss your fears and your surprise.
 'T is I—that maid hath told my tale,
 Or, trembler, did thy courage fail?
 It recks not—it is I demand
 Fair Metelill in marriage band;
 Harold the Dauntless I, whose name
 Is brave men's boast and caitiffs s'hame."—
 The parents sought each other's eyes,
 With awe, resentment, and surprise:
 Wulfstane, to quarrel prompt, began
 The stranger's size and thewes to scan;
 But as he scann'd, his courage sunk,
 And from unequal strife he shrunk.
 Then forth, to blight and blemish, flies
 The harmful curse from Jutta's eyes;
 Yet fatal howsoe'er, the spell
 On Harold innocently fell!
 And disappointment and amaze
 Were in the witch's wilder'd gaze.

XII.

But soon the wit of woman woke,
 And to the warrior mild she spoke:
 "Her child was all too young."—"A toy,
 The refuge of a maiden coy."—
 Again, "A powerful baron's heir
 Claims in her heart an interest fair."
 "A trifle—whisper in his ear,
 That Harold is a suitor here!"
 Baffled at length she sought delay:
 "Would not the knight till morning stay?"

Late was the hour—he there might rest
‘Till morn, their lodge’s honour’d guest.”
Such were her words,—her craft might cast,
Her honour’d guest should sleep his last :
“No, not to night—but soon,” he swore,
“He would return, nor leave them more.”—
The threshold then his huge stride crost,
And soon he was in darkness lost.

XIII.

Appall’d awhile the parents stood,
Then changed their fear to angry mood,
And foremost fell their words of ill
On unresisting Metelill :
Was she not caution’d and forbid,
Forewarn’d, implored, accused, and chid,
And must she still to greenwood roam,
To marshal such misfortune home?
“Hence, minion—to thy chamber hence,
~~There~~ prudence learn and penitence.”
She went—her lonely couch to steep
In tears which absent lovers weep;
Or if she gain’d a troubled sleep,
Fierce Harold’s suit was still the theme
And terror of her feverish dream.

XIV.

Scarce was she gone, her dame and sire
Upon each other bent their ire;
“A woodsman thou, and hast a spear,
And couldst thou such an insult bear?”
Sullen he said, “A man contends
With men, a witch with sprites and fiends;”

Not to mere mortal wight belong
 Yon gloomy brow and frame so strong.
 But thou—is this thy promise fair,
 That your Lord William, wealthy heir
 To Ulrick, Baron of Witton-le-wear,
 Should Metelill to altar bear?
 Do all the spells thou boast'st as thine
 Serve but to slay some peasant's kine,
 His grain in autumn-storms to steep,
 Or thorough fog and fen to sweep,
 And hag-ride some poor rustic's sleep?
 Is such mean mischief worth the fame
 Of sorceress and witch's name?
 Fame, which with all men's wish conspires,
 With thy deserts and my desires,
 To damn thy corpse to penal fires.
 Out on thee, witch! aroint! aroint!
 What now shall put thy schemes in joint?
 What save this trusty arrow's point,
 From the dark dingle when it flies,
 And he who meets it gasps and dies.—

XV.

Stern she replied, « I will not wage
 War with thy folly or thy rage;
 But ere the morrow's sun be low,
 Wulfstane of Rookhope, thou shalt know,
 If I can venge me on a foe.
 Before the while, that whatsoe'er
 I spoke, in ire, of bow and spear,
 It is not Harold's destiny
 The death of pilfer'd deer to die.

But he, and thou, and yon pale moon,
That shall be yet more pallid soon,
Before she sink behind the dell,
Thou, she, and Harold too, shall tell
What Jutta knows of charm or spell.—
Thus muttering, to the door she bent
Her wayward steps, and forth she went,
And left alone the moody sire,
To cherish or to slake his ire.

XVI.

Far faster than belong'd to age,
Has Jutta made her pilgrimage.
A priest has met her as she pass'd,
And cross'd himself and stood aghast :
She traced a hanlet—not a cur
His throat would ope, his foot would stir ;
By crouch, by trembling, and by groan,
They made her hated presence known !
But when she trode the sable fell,
Were wilder sounds her way to tell,—
For far was heard the fox's yell,
The black-cock waked and faintly crew,
Scream'd o'er the moss the scared curlew ;
Where o'er the cataract the oak
Lay slant, was heard the raven's croak ;
The mountain-cat which sought his prey,
Glared, scream'd, and started from her way.
Such music cheer'd her journey lone
To the deep dell and rocking stouë :
There, with unhallow'd hymn of praise,
She called a God of Heathen days.

XVII.

INVOCATION.

From thy Pomeranian throne,
Hewn in rock of living stone,
Where, to thy godhead faithful yet,
Bend Esthonian, Finn, and Lett,
And their swords in vengeance whet,
That shall make thine altars wet,
Wet and red for ages more
With the Christians' hated gore,—
Hear me! Sovereign of the Rock,
Hear me, mighty Zerneckock.

Mightiest of the mighty known,
Here thy wonders have been shown;
Hundred tribes in various tongue
Oft have here thy praises sung,
Down that stone with Runick scam'd
Hundred victims' blood hath stream'd!
Now one woman comes alone, —
And but wets it with her own,
The last, the feeblest of thy flock,—
Hear—and be present, Zerneckock!

Hark! he comes; the night-blast cold
Wilder sweeps along the wold;
The cloudless moon grows dark and dim,
And bristling hair and quaking limb
Proclaim the Master Demon nigh,—
Those who view his form shall die!
Lo! I stoop and veil my head.—
Thou who ridest the tempest dread,

Shaking hill and rending oak—
Spare me! spare me! Zernebock.

He comes not yet! Shall cold delay
Thy votaress at her need repay?
'Thou—shall I call thee god or fiend!—
Let others on thy mood attend
With prayer and ritual—Jutta's arms
Are necromantic words and charms:
Mine is the spell, that, utter'd once,
Shall wake thy Master from his trance,
Shake his red mansion-house of pain,
And burst his seven-times twisted chain,
So! comest thou ere the spell is spoke?
I own thy presence, Zeruebock.

XVIII.

« Daughter of dust,» the Deep Voice said,
—Shook while it spoke the vale for dread.
Rock'd on the base that massive stone,
The evil deity to own,—
« Daughter of dust! not mine the power
Thou seek'st on Harold's fatal hour.
'T wixt heaven and hell there is a strife
Waged for his soul and for his life,
And fain would we the combat win,
And snatch him in his hour of sin.
There is a star now rising red,
That threatens him with an influence dread:
Woman, thine arts of malice whet,
To use the space before it set.
Involve him with the church in strife,
Push on adventurous chance his life;

Ourself will in the hour of need,
As best we may, thy counsels speed."
So ceased the Voice; for seven leagues round
Each hamlet started at the sound ;
But slept again, as slowly died
Its thunders on the hill's brown side.

XIX.

" And is this all," said Jutta stern,
" That thou canst teach and I can learn ?
Hence ! to the land of fog and waste !
There fittest is thine influence placed,
Thou powerless sluggish deity !
But ne'er shall Briton bend the knee
Again before so poor a god."—
She struck the altar with her rod ;
Slight was the touch, as when at need
A damsel stirs her tardy steed ;
But to the blow the stone gave place,
And, starting from its balanced base,
Roll'd thundering down the moon-light dell,—
Re-echo'd moorland, rock, and fell ;
• Into the moon-light tarn it dash'd,
Their shores the sounding surges lash'd,
And there was ripple, rage, and foam ;
But on that lake, so dark, and lone,
Placid and pale the moonbeam' shone
As Jutta hied her home.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

GREY towers of Durham! there was once a time
I view'd your battlements with such vague hope,
As brightens life in its first dawning prime ;
Not that e'en then came within fancy's scope
A vision vain of mitre, throne, or cope ;
Yet, gazing on the venerable hall,
Her flattering dreams would in perspective ope
Some reverend room, some prebendary's stall,—
And thus Hope me deceived as she deceiveth all.

Well yet I love thy mix'd and massive piles,
Half church of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot,
And long to roam these venerable aisles,
With records stored of deeds long since forgot :
There might I share my Surtees' happier lot,
Who leaves at will his patrimonial field
To ransack every crypt and hallow'd spot,
And from oblivion rend the spoils they yield,
Restoring priestly chaunt and clang of knightly
shield.

Vain is the wish—since other cares demand
Each vacant hour, and in another clime ;
But still that nothern harp invites my hand,
Which tells the wonder of thine earlier time ;
And fain its numbers would I now command,
To paint the beauties of thy dawning fair,
When Harold, gazing from its lofty stand
Upon the western heights of Beaurepaire,
Saw Saxon Eadmer's towers begirt by winding Wear.

II.

Fair on the half-seen streams the sunbeams danced,
Betraying it beneath the woodland bank,
And fair between the Gothic turrets glanced
Broad lights, and shadows fell on front and flank,
Where tower and buttress rose in martial rank,
And girdled in the massive donjon keep,
And from their circuit peal'd o'er bush and bank
The matin bell with summons long and deep,
And echo answer'd still with long-resounding sweep.

III.

The morning mists rose from the ground,
Each merry bird awaken'd round
As if in revelry ;
Afar the bugles' clanging sound
Call'd to the chase the lagging hound,
The gale breath'd soft and free,
And seem'd to linger on its way,
To catch fresh odours from the spray,
And waved it in its wanton play
So light and gamesomely.

The scenes which morning beams reveal,
Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
In all their fragrance round him steal,
It melted Harold's heart of steel,
And, hardly wotting why,
He doff'd his helmet's gloomy pride,
And hung it on a tree beside,
Laid mace and falchion by,
And on the green-sward sate him down,
And from his dark habitual frown
Relax'd his rugged brow—
Whoever hath the doubtful task
From that stern Dane a boon to ask,
Were wise to ask it now.

IV.

His place beside young Gunnar took,
And mark'd his master's softening look,
And in his eye's dark mirror spied
The gloom of stormy thought subside,
And cautious watch'd the fittest tide
To speak a warning word.
So when the torrent's billows shrink,
The timid pilgrim on the brink
Waits long to see them wave and sink,
Ere he dare brave the ford;
And often, after doubtful pause,
His step advances or withdraws :
Fearful to move the slumbering ire
Of his stern lord, thus stood the squire,
Till Harold raised his eye,

That glanced as when athwart the shroud
Of the dispersing tempest-cloud
The bursting sunbeams fly.

V.

“Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde,
Offspring of prophetess and bard!
Take harp, and greet this lovely prime
With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell’s sonorous sound,
Yet wild by fits, as when the lay
Of bird and bugle hail the day.
Such was my grandsire Erick’s sport,
When dawn gleam’d on his martial court.
Heýmar the Scald, with harp’s high sound,
Summon’d the chiefs who slept around;
Couch’d on the spoils of wolf and bear,
They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rush’d in emulation forth
To enhance the glories of the north.—
Proud Erick, mightiest of thy race,
Where is thy shadowy resting-place?
In wild Valhalla hast thou quaff’d
From foe-man’s skull metheglin draught,
Or wander’st where thy cairn was piled,
To frown o’er oceans wide and wild?
Or have the milder Christians given
Thy refuge in their peaceful heaven?
Where’er thou art, to thee are known
Our toils endured, our trophies won,
Our wars, our wanderings, and our woes.”—
He ceased, and Gunnar’s song arose.

VI.

SONG.

“HAWK and osprey scream’d for joy
O’er the beetling cliffs of Hoy,
Crimson foam the beach o’erspread,
The heath was dyed with darker red,
When o’er Erick, Inguar’s son,
Dane and Northman piled the stone;
Singing wild the war-song stern,
Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

“Where eddying currents foam and boil
By Bersa’s burgh and Græmsay’s isle,
The seaman sees a martial form
Half-mingled with the mist and storm.
In anxious awe he bears away
To moor his bark in Stromna’s bay,
And murmurs from the bounding stern,
‘Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!’

“What cares disturb the mighty dead?
Each honour’d rite was duly paid;
No daring hand thy helm unlaced,
Thy sword, thy shield, were near thee placed,
Thy flinty couch no tear profaned,
Without, with^h hostile blood ’t was stain’d;
Within, ’t was lined with moss and fern,—
Then rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!

“He may not rest: from realms afar
Comes voice of battle and of war,

Of conquest wrought with bloody hand
 On Carmel's cliffs and Jordan's strand,
 When Odin's warlike son could daunt
 The turban'd race of Termagaunt"—

VII.

"Peace," said the knight, "the noble Scald
 Our warlike fathers' deeds recall'd,
 But never strove to soothe the son
 With tales of what himself had done.
 At Odin's board the bard sits high
 Whose harp ne'er stoop'd to flattery;
 But highest he whose daring lay
 Hath dared unwelcome truths to say." —
 With doubtful smile young Gunnar eyed
 His master's looks, and nought replied—
 But well that smile his master led
 To construe what he left unsaid.
 "Is it to me, thou timid youth,
 Thou fear'st to speak unwelcome truth?
 My soul no more thy censure grieves
 Than frosts rob laurels of their leaves.
 Say on—and yet—beware the rude
 And wild distemper of my blood;
 Loth were I that mine ire should wrong
 The youth that bore my shield so long,
 And who, in service constant still,
 Though weak in frame, art strong in will." —
 "Oh!" quoth the page, "even there depends
 My counsel—there my warning tends.
 Of demons as of my master's breast
 Some demon were the sudden guest;

Then at the first misconstrued word
His hand is on the mace and sword,
From her firm seat his wisdom driven,
His life to countless dangers given.—
O! would that Gunnar could suffice
To be the fiend's last sacrifice,
So that, when glutted with my gore,
He fled and tempted thee no more!»

VIII.

Then waved his hand, and shook his head,
The impatient Dane, while thus he said:
« Profane not, youth—it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line—
The bold Berserker's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring, deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall—
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall—
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like wither'd reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds, and yet survive.
Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory,—
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,
Deep drinks his sword,—deep drinks his soul;

And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire,
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den,
And couches till he's man agen.—
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb,
When 'gins that rage to over-brim—
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;
And when thou seest me roll mine eye,
Set my teeth thus and stamp my foot,
Regard thy safety and be mute;
But else, speak boldly out whate'er
Is fitting that a knight should hear.
I love thee, youth. Thy lay has power
Upon my dark and sullen hour;—
So, Christian monks are wont to say,
Demons of old were charm'd away;—
Then fear not I will rashly deem
Ill of thy speech, whate'er the theme.”

IX.

As down some strait in doubt and dread
The watchful pilot drops the lead,
And, cautious in the midst to steer,
The shoaling channels sounds with fear;
So, lest on dangerous ground he swerved,
The page his master's brow observed,
Pausing at intervals to fling
His hand on the melodious string,
And to his moody breast apply
The soothing charm of harmony,
While hinted half, and half exprest,
This warning song convey'd the rest,

« Ill fares the bark with tackle riven,
And ill when on the breakers driven,—
Ill when the storm-sprite shrieks in air,
And the scared mermaid tears her hair ;
But worse when on her helm the hand
Of some false traitor holds command.

2.

« Ill fares the fainting Palmer, placed
'Mid Hebron's rocks or Rama's waste,—
Ill when the scorching sun is high,
And the expected font is dry,—
Worse when his guide o'er sand and heath,
The barbarous Copt, has plann'd his death.

3.

« Ill fares the knight with buckler cleft,
And ill when of his helm bereft,—
Ill when his steed to earth is flung,
Or from his grasp his falchion wrung ;
But worse, of instant ruin token,
When he lists rede by woman spoken.»

X.

« How now, fond boy?—Canst thou think ill,»
Said Harold, « of fair Metelill?»
« She may be fair,» the page replied,
As through the strings he ranged,—
« She may be fair ; but yet,»—he cried,
And then the strain he changed,—

1.

She may be fair," he sang, " but yet
Far fairer have I seen
Than she, for all her locks of jet,
And eyes so dark and sheen.
Were I a Danish knight in arms,
As one day I may be,
My heart should own no foreign charms,—
A Danish maid for me.

2.

" I love my father's northern land,
Where the dark pine-trees grow,
And the bold Baltic's echoing strand
Looks o'er each grassy oc. '
I love to mark the lingering sun,
From Denmark loth to go,
And leaving on the billows bright,
To cheer the short-lived summer night,
A path of ruddy glow.

3.

" But most the northern maid I love,
With breast like Denmark's snow,
And form as fair as Denmark's pine,
Who loves with purple heath to twine
Her locks of sunny glow ; '
And sweetly blends that shade of gold
With the cheek's rosy hue,
And faith might for her mirror hold
That eye of matchless blue.

Oc, Island.

4.

“T is her's the manly sports to love
That southern maidens fear,
To bend the bow by stream and grove,
And lift the hunter's spear.
She can her chosen champion's fight
With eye undazzled see,
Clasp him victorious from the strife,
Or on his corpse yield up her life,—
A Danish maid for me!”

XI.

Then smiled the Dane — “Thou canst so well
The virtues of our maidens tell,
Half could I wish my choice had been
Blue eyes, and hair of golden sheen,
And lofty soul,—yet what of ill
Hast thou to charge on Metelill?”—
“On her nought,” young Gunnar said,
“But her base sire's ignoble trade.
Her mother, too—the general fame
Hath given to Jutta evil name,
And in her grey eye is a flame
Art cannot hide, nor fear can tame.—
That sordid woodman's peasant cot
Twice have thine honoured footsteps sought,
And twice return'd with such ill rede
As sent thee on some desperate deed.”—

XII.

“Thou errest; Jutta wisely said,
He that comes suitor to a maid,

Ere hark'd in marriage, should provide
 Lands and a dwelling for his bride—
 My father's by the Tyne and Wear
 I have reclaim'd.»—«O, all too dear,
 And all too dangerous the prize,
 E'en were it won,»—young Gunnar cries.
 «And then this Jutta's fresh device,
 That thou should'st seek, a heathen Dane,
 From Dunham's priests a boon to gain,
 When thou hast left their vassals slain
 In their own halls!»—I lash'd Harold's eye,
 Thunder'd his voice—«False page, you lie!
 The castle, hall and tower, is mine,
 Built by old Witikind on Tyne.
 The wild-cat will defend his den,
 Fights for her nest the timid wren;
 And think'st thou I'll forego my right
 For dread of monk or monkish knight?—
 Up and away, that deepening bell
 Doth of the Bishop's conclave tell,
 Thither will I, in manner due,
 As Jutta bade, my claim to sue;
 And, if to right me they are loth,
 Then woe to church and chapter both!»

Now shift the scene and let the curtain fall,
 And our next entry be Saint Cuthbert's hall.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FOURTH.

FELL many a bard hath sung the solemn gloom
Of the long Gothic aisle and stone-ribb'd roof,
O'er canopying shrine, and gorgeous tomb,
Carved screen, and altar glimmering far aloof,
And blending with the shade—a matchless proof
Of high devotion, which hath now wax'd cold;
Yet legends say, that luxury's brute hoof
Intruded oft within such sacred fold,
Like step of Bel's false priest, track'd in his fane of
old.

Well pleased am I, howe'er, that when the route
Of our rude neighbours whilome deign'd to come,
Uncall'd, and eke unwelcome, to sweep out
And cleanse our chancel from the rage of Rome,
They spoke not on our ancient fane the doom
To which their bigot zeal gave o'er their own,
But spared the martyr'd saint and storied tomb,
Though papal miracles had graced the stone,
And though the aisles still loved the organ's swelling
tone.

And deem not, though 'tis now my part to paint
 A prelate sway'd by love of power and gold,
 That all who wore the mitre of our Saint
 Like to ambitious Aldingar I hold;
 Since both in modern times and days of old
 It sate on those whose virtues might atone
 Their predecessors' frailties trebly told:
 Matthew and Morrell we as such may own—
 And such (if fame speak truth) the honoured Bar-
 rington.

II.

But now to earlier and to ruder times,
 As subject meet, I tune my rugged rhymes,
 Telling how fairly the chapter was met,
 And rood and books in seemly order set;
 Huge brass-clasp'd volumes, which the hand
 Of studious priest but rarely scann'd,
 Now on fair carved desk display'd,
 T'was theirs the solemn scene to aid.
 O'er-head with many a scutcheon graced,
 And quaint devices interlaced,
 A labyrinth of crossing rows,
 The roof in lessening arches shows;
 Beneath its shade stood proud and high,
 With footstool and high canopy,
 Sate Aldingar, and prelate ne'er
 More haughty graced Saint Cuthbert's chair.
 Canons and deacons were placed below,
 In due degree and lengthen'd row.
 Unmoved and silent each sate there,
 Like image in his oaken chair;

Nor head, nor hand, nor foot they stirr'd,
 Nor lock of hair, nor tress of beard,
 And of their eyes severe alone
 The twinkle show'd they were not stone.

III.

The Prelate was to speech address'd,
 Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
 But ere his voice was heard without
 Arose a wild, tumultuous shout,
 Offspring of wonder mix'd with fear,
 Such as in crowded streets we hear
 Hailing the flames, that, bursting out,
 Attract yet scare the rabble rout.
 Ere it had ceased, a giant hand
 Shook oaken door and iron band,
 Till oak and iron both gave way.
 Clash'd the long bolts, the hinges bray,
 And ere upon angel or saint they can call,
 Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst of the hall.

IV.

“Now save ye, my masters, both rocket and rood,
 From bishop with mitre to deacon with hood!
 For here stands Count Harold, old Witikind's son,
 Come to sue for the lands which his ancestors won.”
 The Prelate look'd round him with sore troubled eye,
 Unwilling to grant, yet afraid to deny,
 While each canon and deacon who heard the Dane
 speak,
 To be safely at home would have fasted a week:—
 Then Aldingar roused him and answer'd again:

“Thou suest for a boon which thou canst not obtain;
 The church hath no fiefs for an unchristen’d Dane.
 Thy father was wise, and his treasure hath given,
 That the priests of a chantry might hymn him to
 heaven;

And the fiefs which whilome he possess’d as his due,
 Have lapsed to the church, and been granted anew
 To Anthony Conyers and Alberic Vere,
 For the service St Cuthbert’s bless’d banner to bear,
 When the bands of the North come to foray the Wear.
 Then disturb not our conclave with wrangling or
 blame,

But in peace and in patience pass hence as ye came.”

V.

Loud laugh’d the stern Pagan—“They ’re free from
 the care

Of fief and of service, both Conyers and Vere,—
 Six feet of your chancel is all they will need,
 A buckler of stone and a corslet of lead.—

Ho, Gunnar!—the tokens!”—and, sever’d anew
 A head and a hand on the altar he threw.

Then shudder’d with terror both canon and monk,
 They knew the glazed eye and the countenance
 shrunk,

And of Anthony the half-grizzled hair,
 And the scar on the hand of Sir Alberic Vere.

There was not a churchman or priest that was there,
 But grew pale at the sight, and betook him to prayer.

VI.

“Gent Harold laugh’d at their looks of fear:
 “Not this the hand should your banner bear?”

"As that the head should wear the casque
 In battle at the church's task?
 Was it to such you gave the place
 Of Harold with the heavy mace?
 Find me between the Wear and Tyne
 A knight will wield this club of mine,—
 Give him my fiefs, and I will say
 There's wit beneath the cowl of gray.
 He raised it, rough with many a stain,
 Caught from crush'd skull and spouting brain;
 He wheel'd it that it shrilly sung,
 And the aisles echoed as it swung,
 Then dash'd it down with sheer descent,
 And split King Osric's monument.—
 «How like ye this music? How trow ye the hand
 That can wield such a mace may be reft of its land?
 No answer?—I spare ye a space to agree,
 And Saint Cuthbert inspire you, a saint if he be.
 Ten strides through your chancel, ten strokes on
 your bell,
 And again I am with you,—grave fathers, farewell.»

VII.

He turn'd from their presence, he clash'd the oak
 door,
 And the clang of his stride died away on the floor;
 And his head from his bosom the Prelate uprears
 With a ghost-seer's look when the ghost disappears.
 «Ye priests of St Cuthbert, now give me your rede,
 For never of counsel had Bishop more need!
 Were the arch-fiend incarnate in flesh and in bone,
 The language, the look, and the laugh were his own.

In the bounds of Saint Cuthbert there is not a knight
 Dare confront in our quarrel yon goblin in fight.
 Then rede me aright to his claim to reply,
 'T is unlawful to grant, and 't is death to deny "

VIII.

On ven'son and malice that morning had fed
 The Cellarer Vinsauf, thus that he said
 "Delay till to-morrow Chapter's reply;
 Let the feast be spread fair, and the wine be pour'd
 high:

If he 's mortal he drinks,—if he drinks, he is ours—
 His bracelets of iron,—his bed in our towers."—
 This man had a laughing eye,
 Trust not, friends, when such you spy;
 A beaker's depth he well could drain,
 Revel, sport, and jest amain—
 The haunch of the deer and the grape's bright dye
 Never bard loved them better than I;
 But sooner than Vinsauf fill'd me my wine,
 Pass'd me his jest, and laugh'd at mine,
 Though the buck were of Bearpark, of Bourdeaux
 the vine,
 With the dullest hermit I'd rather dine
 On an oaten cake draught of the Tyne.

IX.

Walwayn the Leech spoke next— he knew
 Each plant loves the sun and dew,
 But some whose juice can gain
 Dominion o'er the blood and brain;

The peasant who saw him by pale moonbeam
Gathering such herbs by bank and stream,
Deem'd his thin form and soundless tread
Were those of wanderer from the dead.
"Vinsauf, thy wine," he said, "hath power,
Our gyves are heavy, strong our tower;
Yet three drops from this flask of mine,
More strong than dungeons, gyves, or wine,
Shall give him prison unbound
More dark, more narrow, more profound.
Short rede, good rede, let Harold have—
A dog's death and a heathen's grave."—
I have lain on a sick man's bed,
Watching for hours for the leech's tread,
As if I deem'd that his presence alone
Were of power to bid my pain begone;
I have listed his words of comfort given,
As if to oracles from heaven;
I have counted his steps from my chamber door,
And bless'd them when they were heard no more;—
But sooner than Walwayn my sick couch should
nigh,
My choice were by leech-craft unaided to die.

X.

"Such service done in fervent zeal,
The Church may pardon and conceal,"
The doubtful Prelate said, "but ne'er
The counsel ere the act should hear.—
Anselm of Jarrow, advise us now,
The stamp of wisdom is on thy brow;

Thy days, thy nights in cloister pent,
 Are still to mystic learning lent;—
 Anselm of Jarrow, in thee is my hope,
 Thou well canst give counsel to Prelate or Pope.”

XI.

Answer'd the Prior—“Tis wisdom's use
 Still to delay what we not refuse;
 Ere granting the boon comes hither to ask,
 Shape for the giant gigantic task;
 Let us see how a step so sounding can tread
 In paths of darkness, danger, and dread;
 He may not, he will not, impugn our decree,
 That calls but for proof of his chivalry,
 And were Guy to return, or Sir Bevis the Strong,
 Our wilds have adventure might cumber them long—
 The Castle of Seven Shields”——“Kind Anselm, no
 more!

The step of the Pagan approaches the door.”
 The churchmen were hush'd—In his mantle of skin,
 With his mace on his shoulder, Count Harold strode
 in.

There was foam on his lip, there was fire in his eye,
 For, chafed by attendance, his fury was nigh.

“Ho! Bishop,” he said, “dost thou grant me my
 claim?”

Or must I assert it by falchion and flame?”

XII.

“On thy suit, gallant Harold,” the Bishop replied
 In accents which trembled, “we might not decide,

Until proof of your strength and your valour we
saw—

'T is not that we doubt them, but such is the law.»—

« And would you, Sir Prelate, have Harold make
sport

For the cowls and the shavelings that herd in thy
court?

Say what shall he do?—From the shrine shall he tear
The lead bier of thy patron, and heave it in air,
And through the long chancel make Cuthbert take
wing,

With the speed of a bullet dismiss'd from the sling? »

« Nay, spare such probation, » the Cellarer said,
From the mouth of our minstrels thy task shall be
read,

While the wine sparkles high in the goblet of gold,
And the revel is loudest, thy task shall be told;
And thyself, gallant Harold, shall, hearing it, tell
That the Bishop, his cowls, and his shavelings, meant
well. »

XIII.

Loud revell'd the guests, and the goblets loud rang,
But louder the minstrel, Hugh Meneville, sang;
And Harold, the hurry and pride of whose soul,
Even when verging to fury, own'd music's control,
Still bent on the harper his broad sable eye,
And often untasted the goblet pass'd by;
Than wine, or than wassail, to him was more dear
The minstrel's high tale of enchantment to hear;
And the Bishop that day might of Vinsauf complain
That his art had but wasted his wine-casks in vain.

XIV.

THE CASTLE OF THE SEVEN SHIELDS.

A BALLAD.

THE Druid Urien had daughters seven,
Their skill could call the moon from heaven;
So fair their forms and so high their fame,
That seven proud kings for their suitors came.

King Mador and Rhys came from Powis and Wales,
Unshorn was their hair, and unpruned were their
nails;
From Strath Clwyde came Ewain, and Ewain was
lame,
And the red-bearded Donald from Galloway came.

Lot, King of Lodon, was hunch-back'd from youth;
Dunmail of Cumbria had never a tooth;
But Adolf of Bambrough, Northumberland's heir,
Was gay and was gallant, was young and was fair.

There was strife 'mongst the sisters, for each one
would have
For husband King Adolf, the gallant and brave,
And envy bred hate, and hate urged them to blows,
When the firm earth was cleft, and the Arch-fiend
arose!

He swore to the maidens their wish to fulfil—
They swore to the foe they would work by his will.
A spindle and distaff to each hath he given,
"Now hearken my spell," said the Outcast of heaven

« Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have
power,
And there shall ye dwell with your paramour.»

Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold,
And the rhymes which they chaunted must never be
told ;
And as the black wool from the distaff they sped,
With blood from their bosom they moisten'd the
thread.

As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream—
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground,
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches surround.

Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed,
But six of the seven ere the morning lay dead ;
With their eyes all on fire, and their daggers all red,
Seven damsels surround the Northumbrian's bed.

« Six kingly bridegrooms to death we have done,
Six gallant kingdoms King Adolf hath won,
Six lovely brides all his pleasure to do,
Or the bed of the seventh shall be husbandless too.»

Well chanced it that Adolf the night when he wed
Had confess'd and had sain'd him ere boune to his
bed ;

He sprung from the couch and his broad sword he
drew,
And there the seven daughters of Urien he slew.

The gate of the castle he bolted and seal'd,
And hung o'er each arch-stone a crown and a shield
To the cells of St Dunstan then wended his way,
And died in his cloister an anchorite grey.

Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lies stow'd,
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven and toad.
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within,
From curfew till matins, that treasure shall win.

But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old!
There lives not in Britain a champion so hold,
So dauntless of heart, and so prudent of brain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to gain.

The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumberland fly,
And the flint cliffs of Bambro' shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be peril'd and won.

XV.

« And is this my probation ? » wild Harold he said,
« Within a lone castle to press a lone bed ? —
Good even, my Lord Bishop, — Saint Cuthbert to
harrow,
The Castle of Seven Shields receives me to-morrow. »

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO FIFTH.

DENMARK's sage courtier to her princely youth,
Granting his cloud an ouzel or a whale,
Spoke, though unwittingly, a partial truth;
For Phantasy embroiders Nature's veil.
The tints of ruddy eve, or dawning pale,
Of the swart thunder-cloud, or silver haze,
Are but the ground-work of the rich detail
Which Phantasy with pencil wild pourtrays,
Blending what seems and is, in the rapt muser's gaze.

Nor are the stubborn forms of earth and stone
Less to the Sorceress's empire given:
For not with unsubstantial hues alone,
Caught from the varying surge, or vacant heaven,
From bursting sunbeam, or from flashing levin,
She limns her pictures—on the earth, as air,
Arise her castles, and her car is driven;
And never gazed the eye on scene so fair,
But of its boasted charms fancy gave half the share.

II

Up a wild pass went Harold, bent to prove,
 Hugh Meneville, the adventure of thy lay,
 Gunnar pursued his steps in faith and love,
 Ever companion of his master's way.
 Midward their path, a rock of granite grey
 From the adjoining cliff had made descent,—
 A barren mass—yet with her drooping spray
 Had a young birch-tree crown'd its battlement,
 Twisting her fibrous roots through cranny, flaw, and
 rent.

This rock and tree could Gunnar's thought engage,
 Till Fancy brought the tear-drop to his eye,
 And at his master ask'd the timid page,
 « What is the emblem that a bard shou'd spy
 In that rude rock and its green canopy?»
 And Harold said, « Like to the helmet brave
 Of warrior slain in fight it seems to lie,
 And these same drooping boughs do o'er it wave
 Not all unlike the plume his lady's favour gave.»

« Ah, no!» replied the page; « the ill-starr'd love
 Of some poor maid is in the emblem shown,
 Whose fates are with some hero's interwove,
 And rooted on a heart to love unknown
 And as the gentle dews of heaven alone
 Nourish those drooping boughs, and as the scath
 Of the red lightning rends both tree and stone,
 So fast with her unrequited faith,—
 Her only relief is tears—her only refuge death.»

III.

"Thou art a fond, fantastic boy,"
Harold replied, "to females come."

Yet prating still of love;
Even so amid the clash of war
I know thou lovest to keep alive;
Though destined by thy evil fate

With one life-time to rove,
Whose business and whose joys are found
Upon the bloody battle-ground.

Yet, foolish trembler as thou art,
Thou hast a nook of my rude heart,
And thou and I will never part;
Harold would wrap the world in his arms
Lie injury on Gunnar's arms."

IV.

The grateful page made no reply,
But turn'd to heaven his gentle eye,
And clasp'd his hands, as one who said,
"My toils—my wanderings are o'er;
Then in a gayer, lighter state,
Compell'd himself to speech again;

And, as they flow'd along,
His words took cadence soft and slow,
And liquid, like dissolving snow,
They melted into song.

V.

"What though through fields of carnage I
I may not follow Harold's stride,
Yet who with faithful Gunnar's pride

"Lord Harold's feats can see?
 And dearer than the touch of pride
 He loves the bed of grey wolf's hide,
 When slumbering by Lord Harold's side
 In forest, field, or lea."

VI.

"Break off!" said Harold, in a tone
 Where hurry and surprise were shown,
 With some slight touch of fear,—
 "Break off, we are not here alone;
 A Palmer form comes slowly on!
 By cowl, and staff, and mantle known,
 My monitor is near.
 Now mark him, Gunnar, heedfully;
 He pauses by the blighted tree—
 Dost see him, youth?—Thou couldst not
 When in the vale of Galilee
 I first beheld his form,
 Nor when we met that other while
 In Cephalonia's rocky isle,
 Before the fearful storm,—
 Dost see him now?"—The page, distraught
 With terror, answer'd, "I see nought,
 And there is nought to see,
 Save that the oak's scathed boughs fling down
 Upon the path a shadow brown,
 That, like a pilgrim's dusky gown,
 Waves with the waving tree."

VII

Count Harold gazed upon the oak
 As if his eye-strings would have broke,

And then resolvedly said,—
 Be what it will, yon phantom grey,
 Not heaven, nor hell, shall ever say
 That for their shadows from his way
 Count Harold turn'd dismay'd
 I'll speak him, though his accents fill
 My heart with that unwonted thrill
 Which vulgar minds call fear.
 I will subdue it!—Forth he strode,
 Paused where the blighted oak-tree show'd
 Its sable shadow on the road,
 And, folding on his bosom broad
 His arms, said, "Speak—I hear."

VIII

The Deep Voice said, "O wild of will,
 Furious thy purpose to fulfil—
 Heart-squand and unrepentant still,
 How long, O Harold, shall thy tread
 Disturb the slumbers of the dead?
 Each step in thy wild way thou makest
 The ashes of the dead thou wakest;
 And shout in triumph o'er thy path
 The deeds of bloodshed and of wrath.
 In this thine hour, yet turn and hear!
 For life is brief, and judgment near."

IX

Then ceased The Voice.—The Dane replied
 In tones where awe and inborn pride
 For mastery strove,—"In vain ye chide
 The wolf for ravaging the flock,
 Or with its hardness taunt the rock,—
 —"

I am as they—my Danish strain
Sends streams of fire through every vein.

Amid thy realms of ghouls and ghost,
Say, is the fame of Erick lost?

Or Witikind's the Waster, known

Where fame or spoil was to be won ;

Whose galleys ne'er bore off a shore

They left not black with flame?—

He was my sire,—and, sprung of him,

That rover merciless and grim,

Can I be soft and tame ?

Part hence, and with my crimes no more upbraid me
I am that Waster's son, and am but what he made me

X.

The Phantom groan'd;—the mountain shook around

The fawn and wild-doe started at the sound,

The gorse and fern did wildly round them wave,

As if some sudden storm the impulse gave.

All thou hast said is truth—Yet on the head

Of that bad sire let not the charge be laid,

That he, like thee, with unrelenting pace,

From grave to cradle ran the evil race —

Relentless in his avarice and ire,

Churches and towns he gave to sword and fire,

Shed blood like water, wasted every land,

Like the destroying angel's burning brand,

Fulfilled whatever of ill might be invented,

Yet—all these things he did—he did, but here

Perchance it is part of his punishment still,

That his offspring pursues his example of ill

But thou, when thy tempest of wrath shall next shake
 thee,
 And thy loins for resistance, my son, and awake thee;
 If thou yield'st to thy fury, how tempted soever,
 The gate of repentance shall ope for thee NEVER !"

XI

He is gone," said Lord Harold, and gazed as he
 spoke;

There is nought on the path but the shade of the
 oak,—

He is gone, whose strange presence my feeling op-
 press'd,

I like the night-hag that sits on the slumberer's breast.

My heart beats as thick as a fugitive's tread,

And cold dews drop from my brow and my head.

Ho! Grannar, the flasket yon almoner gave;

He said that three drops would recal from the grave.

I or the first time Count Harold owns leech-craft has
 power,

Or, his courage to aid, lacks the juice of a flower!—

The page gave the flasket, which Walwayn had fill'd

With the juice of wild roots that his art had distill'd—

So baneful their influence on all that had breath,

One drop had been frenzy, and two had been death.

Harold took it, but drank not; for jubilee shrill,

And music and clamour, were heard on the hill,

And down the steep pathway, o'er stock and o'er
 stone,

The train of a bridal came blithesomely on;

There was song, there was pipe, there was timbrel,
 and still

The burden was, "Joy to the fair Metelill!"

XII

Harold might see from his high stance,
Himself unseen, that train advance

With mirth and melody,—

On horse and foot a mingled throng,
Measuring their steps to bridal song

And bridal minstrelsy;

And ever when the blithesome rout

Lent to the song their choral shout,

Redoubling echoes roll'd about,

While echoing cave and cliff sent out

The answering symphony,

Of all those mimic notes which dwell

In hollow rock and sounding dell.

XIII.

Joy shook his torch above the band,

By many a various passion fann'd;—

As elemental sparks can feed

On essence pure and coarsest weed,

Gentle, or stormy, or refined,

Joy takes the colours of the mind.

Lightsome and pure, but unexpress'd,

He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast,

More feebly strove with maiden fear,

Yet still joy glimmer'd through the tear

On the bride's blushing cheek, that shows

Like dew-drop on the budding rose;

While Wulfstane's gloomy smile declared

The joy that selfish avarice shared,

And nursed revenge and malice high

As a glance took in Jutta's eye.

On dangerous adventure sped,
The witch deem'd Harold with the dead,
For thus that morn her Demon said :—
 If, ere the set of sun, be tied
The knot 'twixt bridegroom and his bride,
The Dane shall have no power of ill
O'er William and o'er Metehill.
And the pleased witch made answer, « Then
Must Harold have pass'd from the paths of men !
Evil repose may his spirit have,—
May hemlock and mandrake find root in his grave,—
May his death-sleep be dogg'd by dreams of dismay,
And his waking be worse at the answering day ! »—

XIV.

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstasy.
But still when joy is brimming highest,
Of sorrow and misfortune nighest,
Of terror with her ague cheek,
And lurking danger, sages speak :—
These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way.—
Thus found that bridal band their path
Beset by Harold in his wrath.
Trembling beneath his maddening mood,
Lush on a rock the giant stood ;
His shout was like the doom of death
Spoke o'er their heads that pass'd beneath.
His destined victims might not spy
The reddening terrors of his eye,—

The frown of rage that writhed his face
 The lip that foam'd like boar's in chase, —
 But all could see—and, seeing, all
 Bore back to shun the threaten'd fall,—
 The fragment which their giant foe
 Rent from the cliff and heaved to throw.

XV

Backward they bore;—yet are there two
 For battle who prepare.
 No pause of dread Lord William knew
 Ere his good blade was bare;
 And Wulfstane bent his fatal yew,
 But ere the silken cord he drew,
 As hurl'd from Hecla's thunder, flew
 That ruin through the air!—
 Full on the outlaw's front it came,
 And all that late had human name,
 And human face, and human frame,
 That lived, and moved, and had free will
 To choose the path of good or ill,
 Is to its reckoning gone;
 And nought of Wulfstane rests behind,
 Save that beneath that stone,
 Half-buried in the dinted clay,
 A red and shapeless mass there lay,
 Of mingled flesh and bone!

XVI.

As from the bosom of the sky
 The eagle darts amain,
 Three bounds from yonder summit high
 Placed Harold on the plain.

As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,
So fled the bridal train ;
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might
The noble falcon dares the fight,
But dares the fight in vain,
So fought the bridegroom ; from his hand
The Dane's rude mace has struck his brand,
Its glittering fragments strew the sand,
Its lord lies on the plain.
Now, Heaven ! take noble William's part,
And melt that yet unmelted heart,
Or, ere his bridal hour depart,
The hapless bridegroom's slain !

XVII.

Count Harold's frenzied rage is high,
There is a death-fire in his eye,
Deep furrows on his brow are trench'd,
His teeth are set, his hand is clench'd,
The foam upon his lip is white,
His deadly arm is up to smite !
But, as the mace aloft he swung,
To stop the blow young Gunnar sprung,
Around his master's knees he clung,
And cried, " In mercy spare !
O, think upon the words of fear
Spoke by that visionary Seer,
The crisis he foretold is here,—
Grant mercy,—or despair !"
This word suspended Harold's mood,
Yet still with arm upraised he stood,
And visage like the headsman's rude

That pauses for the sign.

"O mark thee with the blessed rood,"
The page implored; "Speak word of good,
Resist the fiend, or be subdued!"—

He sign'd the cross divine—
Instant his eye hath human light,
Less red, less keen, less fiercely bright,
His brow relax'd the obdurate frown,
The fatal mace sinks gently down,

He turns and strides away;
Yet oft, like revellers who leave
Unfinish'd feast, looks back to grieve,
As if repenting the reprieve

He granted to his prey.
Yet still of forbearance one sign hath he given,
And fierce Witikind's son made one step towards
heaven.

XVIII.

But though his dreaded footsteps part,
Death is behind and shakes his dart;
Lord William on the plain is lying,
Beside him Metelill seems dying!—
Bring odours—essences in haste—
And lo! a flasket richly chased,—
But Jutta the elixir proves
Ere pouring it for those she loves—
Then Walwayn's potion was not wasted,
For when three drops the hag had tasted,
So dismal was her yell,
Each heart of evil omen woke,
The Raven gave his fatal croak,
And shriek'd the night-crow from the oak,
The screech-owl from the thicket broke,

And flutter'd down the dell!
So fearful was the sound and stern,
The slumbers of the full-gorged erne
Were startled, and from furze and fern
Of forest and of fell,
The fox and famish'd wolf replied
(For wolves then prowld the Cheviot side),
From mountain head to mountain head
The unhallow'd sounds around were sped;
But when their latest echo fled,
The sorceress on the ground lay dead.

XIX.

Such was the scene of blood and woes,
With which the bridal morn arose
Of William and of Metelill;
But oft, when dawning 'gins to spread,
The summer morn peeps dim and red
Above the eastern hill,
Ere, bright and fair, upon his road
The King of splendour walks abroad;
So, when this cloud had pass'd away,
Bright was the noon-tide of their day,
And all serene its setting ray.

HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

CANTO SIXTH.

Will do I hope that this my minstrel tale
Will tempt no traveller from southern fields,
Whether in tilbury, barouche, or mail,
To view the Castle of these Seven proud Shields.
Small confirmation its condition yields
To Meneville's high lay,—No towers are seen
On the wild heath, but those that Fancy builds,
And, save a fosse which tracks the moor with green,
Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been.

And yet grave authors, with the no small waste
Of their grave time, have dignified the spot
By theories, to prove the fortress placed
By Roman hands, to curb the invading Scot.
Hutchinson, Horsley, Camden, I might quote,
But rather chuse the theory less civil
Of boors, who, origin of things forgot,
Refer still to the origin of evil,
And for their master-mason chuse that master-fiend
the Devil.

II.

Therefore, I say, it was on fiend-like towers
 That stout Count Harold bent his wondering gaze,
 When evening dew was on the heather flowers,
 And the last sunbeams bade the mountain blaze,
 And tinged the battlements of other days
 With a bright level light ere sinking down
 Illumined thus, the dauntless Dane survey'd
 The Seven proud Shields that o'er the wall were shown,
 And on their blazons traced high in gold of old re-
 nown.

A wolf North Wales had on his armour-coat,
 And Rhys of Powis-land a couchant stag;
 Strath-Clwyde's strange emblem was a stranded boat,
 Donald of Galloway a trotting nag;
 A corn-sheaf gilt was fertile Lodon's brag;
 A dudgeon-dagger was by Dunmail worn;
 Northumbrian Adolf gave a sea-beat crag
 Surmounted by a cross—such signs were borne
 Upon these antique shields, all wasted now and worn

III.

These seann'd, Count Harold sought the castle door,
 Whose ponderous bolts were rusted to decay;
 Yet till that hour adventurous knight forbore
 The unobstructed passage to essay.
 More strong than armed warders in array,
 And obstacle more sure than bolt or bar,
 Sat in the portal Terror and Dismay,
 While Superstition, who forbade to war
 With foes of other mould than mortal clay,
 Cast spells across the gate, and barr'd the onward way

Vain now those spells—for soon with heavy clank
The feebly-fasten'd gate was inward push'd,
And, as it oped, through that emblazon'd rank
Of antique shields the wind of evening rush'd
With sound most like a groan, and then was hush'd.
Is none who on such spot such sounds could hear
But to his heart the blood had faster rush'd,
Yet to bold Harold's breast that throb was dear—
It spoke of danger nigh, but had no touch of fear.

IV.

Yet Harold and his page no signs have traced
Within the castle that of danger show'd;
For still the halls and courts were wild and waste,
As through their precincts the adventurers trode.
The seven huge towers rose stately, tall, and broad,
Each tower presenting to their scrutiny
A hall in which a king might make abode,
And fast beside, garnish'd both proud and high,
Was placed a bower for rest in which a king might
lie.

As if a bridal there of late had been,
Deck'd stood the table in each gorgeous hall;
And yet it was two hundred years, I ween,
Since date of that unhallow'd festival.
Lagons, and ewers, and standing cups, were all
Of tarnish'd gold, or silver nothing clear
With throne begilt, and canopy of pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls with fragments
scar,—
And as the spider's mesh did that rich woof appear.

In every bower, as round a hearth, was hung
 A dusky crimson curtain o'er the bed,
 And on each couch in ghastly wise were hung
 The wasted reliques of a monarch dead ;
 Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
 Vests, twined with gold, and chains of precious
 stone,
 And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head ;
 While grinn'd, as if in scorn amongst them thrown
 The wearer's fleshless skull, alike with dust bestrown

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
 On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
 For whom the bride's shy footstep, slow and light,
 Was charged ere morning to the murderer's tread
 For human bliss and woe in the frail thread
 Of human life are all so closely twined,
 That till the shears of fate the texture shred,
 The close succession cannot be disjoin'd,
 Nor dare we from one hour judge that which comes
 behind.

VI.

But where the work of vengeance had been done,
 In that seventh chamber, was a sterner sight ;
 The six of the witch-brides lay each skeleton,
 Still in the posture as to death when light.
 Faintly lay prone, by one blow slain outright ;
 As one who struggled long in dying,
 One hand held knife as if to smite ;
 One bent on fleshless knees as merry crying ;
 One lay across the door, as kill'd in act of flying

The stern Dane smiled this charnel-house to see,—

For his chafed thought return'd to Metelil;—

And «Well,» he said, «hath woman's perfidy,

Empty as air, as water volatile,
Been here avenged.—The origin of ill

I through woman rose, the Christian doctrine saith;
Not deem I, Gunnar, that thy minstrel skill

Can show example where a woman's breath
Hath made a true-love vow, and, tempted, kept her
Faith.»

VII

The minstrel boy half smiled, half sigh'd,
And his half-filling eyes he di'd,

And said, «The theme I should but wrong,

Unless it were my dying song

Our Scalds have said in dying hour

The Northern harp has treble power),

Else could I tell of woman's faith

Defying danger, scorn, and death.

True was that faith,—as diamond stone

Pure and unflaw'd,—her love unknown,

And unrequited,—firm and pure,

Her stainless faith could all endure;

From clime to clime,—from place to place,—

Through want, and danger, and disgrace,

A wanderer's wayward steps could trace. —

All this she did, and guerdon none

Required, save that her burial-stone

Should make at length the secret known,

Thus hath a faithful woman done.—

Not much in breast such truth is laid,

but I ever was a Danish maid.»

VIII

"Thou art a wild enthusiast," said
 Count Harold, "for thy Danish maid;
 And yet, young Gunnar, I will own
 Her's were a faith to rest upon
 But Eivir sleeps beneath her stone,
 And all resembling her are gone
 What maid e'er shew'd such constancy
 In plighted faith, like thine to me'
 But couch thee, boy; the dusky shade
 Falls thickly round, nor be dismay'd

Because the dead are by
 They were as we, our little day
 O'erspent, and we shall be as they
 Yet near me, Gunnar, be thou laid,
 Thy couch up in my mantle made,
 That thou may'st think, should fear invade,
 Thy master slumbers nigh."
 Thus couch'd they in that dread abode,
 Until the beams of dawning glow'd

IX.

An alter'd man Lord Harold rose,
 When he beheld the dawn unclose—

"There's trouble in his eyes,
 And traces on his brow and cheek
 Of mingled awe and wonder speak

"My page," he said, "rise:—
 Leave we this place, my page."—Not more
 He utter'd, ~~at~~ the castle-door
 They cross'd—but there he paused and said
 "My wildness hath awak'd the dead—

Disturb'd the sacred tomb!—
 I thought this night I stood on high
 With Hecla roaring middle sky,
 And her cavern'd gulphs could spy
 The central face of doom!
 My soul before my mortal eye
 Glimpsed the dead came flitting by,
 Whom fiends, with many a fiendish cry,
 Bore to that evil den!
 My eyes grew dizzy, and my brain
 Was wilder'd, as the dervish turn,
 With shriek and howl, dragg'd on amain
 Those who had late been men.

X

With haggard eyes and streaming hair,
 Jutting the sorceress, was there,
 And there pass'd Wulstine, latly slain,
 All crush'd and foul with bloody stain—
 More had I seen, but that uprose
 A whirl wind wild, and swept the snows,
 And with such sound as when at need
 A champion spurs his horse to speed,
 The armed knights rush on, who lead
 The onward a sable steed
 In full harness, and there came
 With their closed visors sparks of flame
 To burn'd in sounds of fear,
 He dauntless, welcome here!"
 The next day 'Jubilee' we've won
 But Wulstine the Wister's son!"

And the third rider sternly spoke,
‘Mount, in the name of Zernebock!—
From us, O Harold, were thy powers,—
Thy strength, thy dauntlessness, are ours;
Nor think, a vassal thou of hell,
With hell canst strive.’ The fiend spoke true!
My inmost soul the summons knew,
As captives know the knell,
That says the headsman’s sword is bare,
And with an accent of despair
Commands them quit their cell.
I felt resistance was in vain,
My foot had that fell stirrup ta’en,
My hand was on the fatal mane,
When to my rescue sped
That Palmer’s visionary form,
And—like the passing of a storm—
The demons yell’d and fled!

XI.

“His sable cowl, flung back, reveal’d
The features it before conceal’d;
And, Gunnar, I could find
In him whose counsels strove to stay
So oft my course on wilful way,
My father Witikind!
Doom’d for his sins, and doom’d for mine,
A wanderer upon earth to pine,
Until his son shall turn to grace,
And smooth for him a resting-place!—
Gunnar, he must not haunt in vain
This world of wretchedness and pain:

I'll tame my wilful heart to live
In peace—to pity and forgive—
And thou, for so the vision said,
Must in thy Lord's repentance aid.
Thy mother was a prophetess,
He said, who by her skill could guess
How close the fatal textures join
Which knit thy thread of life with mine ;
Then, dark, he hinted of disguise
She framed to cheat too curious eyes,
That not a moment might divide
Thy fated footsteps from my side.
Methought, while thus my sire did teach,
I caught the meaning of his speech,
Yet seems its purport doubtful now.—
His hand then sought his thoughtful brow.—
Then first he mark'd, that in the tower
His glove was left at waking hour.

XII.

Trembling at first, and deadly pale,
Had Gunnar hear'd the vision'd tale ;
But when he learn'd the dubious close,
He blush'd like any opening rose,
And, glad to hide his tell-tale cheek,
Hied back that glove of mail to seek ;
When soon a shriek of deadly dread
Summon'd his master to his aid.

XIII.

What sees Count Harold in that bower,
So late his resting-place?—

The semblance of the Evil Power,
 Adored by all his race!
 Odin in living form stood there,
 His cloak the spoils of Polar bear;
 For plummy crest, a meteor shed
 Its gloomy radiance o'er his head,
 Yet veil'd its haggard majesty
 To the wild lightnings of his eye.
 Such height was his, as when in stone
 O'er Upsal's giant altar shown;
 So flow'd his hoary beard;
 Such was his lance of mountain-pine,
 So did his sevenfold buckler shine;
 But when his voice he rear'd,
 Deep, without harshness, slow and strong,
 The powerful accents roll'd along,
 And, while he spoke, his hand was laid
 On captive Gunnar's shrinking head.

XIV.

"Harold," he said, "what rage is thine
 To quit the worship of thy line,
 To leave thy Warrior God?—
 With me is glory or disgrace,
 Mine is the onset and the chase,
 Embattled hosts before my face
 Are wither'd by a nod.
 Wilt thou then forfeit that high seat,
 Deserved by many a dauntless feat
 Among the heroes of thy line,
 Eric and thy Thorarine?—
 Thou wilt not. Only I can give
 The joys for which the valiant live.

Victory and vengeance—only I
Can give the joys for which they die,—
The immortal tilt—the banquet full,
The brimming draught from foeman's scull.
Mine art thou, witness this thy glove,
The faithful pledge of vassal's love.»

XV.

« Tempter,» said Harold, firm of heart,
« I charge thee hence ! whate'er thou art,
I do defy thee—and resist
The kindling frenzy of my breast,
Waked by thy words ; and of my mail
Nor glove, nor buckler, splent, nor nail,
Shall rest with thee—that youth release,
And god, or demon, part in peace.»—
« Fivir,» the Shape replied, « is mine,
Mark'd in the birth-hour with my sign.
Think'st thou that priest with drops of spray
Could wash that blood-red mark away?
Or that a borrow'd sex and name
Can abrogate a godhead's claim ?»—
Thrill'd this strange speech through Harold's
brain,
He clench'd his teeth in high disdain,
For not his new-born faith subdued
Some tokens of his ancient mood.—
Now, by the hope so lately given
Of better trust and purer heaven,
I will assail thee, fiend !»—Then rose
His mace, and with a storm of blows
The mortal and the demon close.

XVI.

Smoke roll'd above, fire flash'd around,
Darken'd the sky and shook the ground;
But not the artillery of hell,
The bickering lightning, nor the rock
Of turrets to the earthquake's shock,
Could Harold's courage quell.
Sternly the Dane his purpose kept,
And blows on blows resistless heap'd,
Till quail'd that demon form,
And—for his power to hurt or kill
Was bounded by a higher will—
Evanish'd in the storm.
Nor paused the Champion of the North,
But raised, and bore his Eivir forth
From that wild scene of fiendish strife,
To light, to liberty, and life!

XVII.

He placed her on a bank of moss,
A silver rannel bubbled by,
And new-born thoughts his soul engross,
And tremors yet unknown across
His stubborn sinews fly,
The while with timid hand the dew
Upon her brow and neck he threw,
And mark'd how life with rosy hue
On her pale cheek revived anew,
And glimmer'd in her eye.
Toly he said, « That silken tress,
What blindness mine that could not guess
Or how could page's rugged dress

That bosom's pride belie?
O, dull of heart, through wild and wave
In search of blood and death to rave,
With such a partner nigh!

XVIII.

Then in the mirror'd pool he peer'd,
Blamed his rough locks and shaggy beard,
The stains of recent conflict clear'd, —
And thus the Champion proved,
That he fears now who never fear'd,
And loves who never loved.
And Eivir—life is on her cheek,
And yet she will not move or speak,
Nor will her eye-lid fully ope;
Perchance it loves, that half-shut eye,
Through its long fringe, reserved and shy,
Affection's opening dawn to spy;
And the deep blush, which bids its dye
O'er cheek, and brow, and bosom fly,
Speaks shame-facedness and hope.

XIX.

But vainly seems the Dane to seek
For terms his new-born love to speak,—
For words, save those of wrath and wrong,
Till now were strangers to his tongue;
So, when he raised the blushing maid,
In blunt and honest terms he said,—
("T were well that maids, when lovers woo,
Heard none more soft, were all as true,"
"Eivir! since thou for many a day
Hast follow'd Harold's wayward way,

HAROLD THE PAUNTLESS,

It is but meet that in the line
Of after-life I follow thine.
To-morrow is Saint Guthbert's tide,
And we will grace his altar's side,
A Christian knight and Christian bride ;
And of Witikind's son shall the marvel be said,
That on the same morn he was christen'd and
wed.

CONCLUSION.

AND now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid?
And why these listless looks of yawning sorrow ?
No need to turn the page, as if 't were lead,
Or fling aside the volume till to-morrow.—
Be cheer'd—'t is ended—and I will not borrow,
To try thy patience more, one anecdote
From Bartholine, or Perinskiold, or Snorro.
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote
A tale six cantos long, yet scorn'd to add a note.

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN;
OR,
THE VALE OF ST JOHN.
A LOVER'S TALE.

An elf-queene wol I love vwis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make in toun ·
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-queene I me take
By dale and eke by doun

RIME OF SIR THOPAS.

PREFACE.

IN the EDINBURGH ANNUAL REGISTER for the year 1809, three fragments were inserted, written in imitation of living poets. It must have been apparent, that by these prolusions, nothing burlesque or disrespectful to the authors was intended, but that they were offered to the public as serious, though certainly very imperfect, imitations of that style of composition, by which each of the writers is supposed to be distinguished. As these exercises attracted a greater degree of attention than the author anticipated, he has been induced to complete one of them, and present it as a separate publication.

It is not in this place that an examination of the works of the master whom he has here adopted as his model, can, with propriety, be introduced; since his general acquiescence in the favourable suffrage of the public must necessarily be inferred from the attempt he has now made. He is induced, by the nature of his subject, to offer a few remarks on what has been called ROMANTIC POETRY;—the popularity of which has been revived in the present day, under

the auspices, and by the unparalleled success, of one individual.

The original purpose of poetry is either religious or historical, or, as must frequently happen, a mixture of both. To modern readers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance; but in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages. The marvels and miracles which the poet blends with his song, do not exceed in number or extravagance the figments of the historians of the same period of society; and, indeed, the difference betwixt poetry and prose, as the vehicles of historical truth, is always of late introduction. Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. Their intention is to relate the events they have witnessed or the traditions that have reached them; and they clothe the relation in rhyme, merely as the means of rendering it more solemn in the narrative, or more easily committed to memory. But as the poetical historian improves in the art of conveying information, the authenticity of his narrative unavoidably declines. He is tempted to dilate and dwell upon the events that are interesting to his imagination, and, conscious how indifferent his audience is to the naked truth of his poem, his history gradually becomes a romance.

It is in this situation that those epics are found which have been generally regarded the stand-
ard

of poetry; and it has happened somewhat strangely, that the moderns have pointed out, as the characteristics and peculiar excellencies of narrative poetry, the very circumstances which the authors themselves adopted, only because their art involved the duties of the historian as well as the poet. It cannot be believed, for example, that Homer selected the siege of Troy as the most appropriate subject for poetry; his purpose was to write the early history of his country: the event he has chosen, though not very fruitful in varied incident, nor perfectly well adapted for poetry, was nevertheless combined with traditional and genealogical anecdotes extremely interesting to those who were to listen to him; and this he has adorned by the exertions of a genius, which, if it has been equalled, has certainly been never surpassed. It was not till comparatively a late period that the general accuracy of his narrative, or his purpose in composing it, was brought into question. Δοκεῖ πρῶτος ὁ Ἀνδρῶν γένεσις (γενεὴ ἔφησι Φυλῶσθινος ἐν παντοῦσιν ἱστορίαις) τῆν Ομήρου ποιήσιν ἀπὸ χρηστῶν εἶναι μετῆς καὶ διεικαιοσύνης.¹ But whatever theories might be framed by speculative men, his work was of an historical, not of an allegorical nature. Ἐνδοτιλλέτο μετὰ τῶν Μενέτωρ, καὶ ὅπου ἐννοεῖται ἀγνοοῖτο, πάντα τὰ ἐπιχωρίῳ διερωτῶτο, καὶ ἱστορεῶν ἐπαθλυνέτο. εἰνος δὲ γινῆναι καὶ μυήσεσθαι πάντων γροῦζεσθαι.² Instead of recommending the choice of a subject similar to that of Homer, it was to be expected that critics should have exhorted the poets of

¹ Diogenes Laertius, l. 11. p. 8.

² Homeri Vita.

these later days to adopt or invent a narrative in itself more susceptible of poetical ornament, and to avail themselves of that advantage in order to compensate, in some degree, the inferiority of genius. The contrary course has been inculcated by almost all the writers upon the *Épopée*; with what success, the fate of Homer's numerous imitators may best show. The *ultimum supplicium* of criticism was inflicted on the author if he did not chuse a subject which at once deprived him of all claim to originality, and placed him, if not in actual contest, at least in fatal comparison, with those giants in the land, whom it was most his interest to avoid. The celebrated recipe for writing an epic poem, which appeared in the *Guardian*, was the first instance in which common sense was applied to this department of poetry; and indeed, if the question be considered on its own merits, we must be satisfied that narrative poetry, if strictly confined to the great occurrences of history, would be deprived of the individual interest which it is so well calculated to excite.

Modern poets may therefore be pardoned in seeking simpler subjects of verse, more interesting in proportion to their simplicity. Two or three figures, well grouped, suited the artist better than a crowd, for whatever purpose assembled. For the same reason a scene immediately presented to the imagination, and directly brought home to the feelings, though involving the fate but of one or two persons, is more favourable for poetry than the political struggles and convulsions which influence the fate of kingdoms. The former are within the reach and

comprehension of all, and, if depicted with vigour, seldom fail to fix attention : the other, if more sublime, are more vague and distant, less capable of being distinctly understood, and infinitely less capable of exciting those sentiments which it is the very purpose of poetry to inspire. To generalize is always to destroy effect. We would, for example, be more interested in the fate of an individual soldier in combat, than in the grand event of a general action; with the happiness of two lovers raised from misery and anxiety to peace and union, than with the successful exertions of a whole nation. From what causes this may originate, is a separate, and obviously an immaterial consideration. Before ascribing this peculiarity to causes decidedly and odiously selfish, it is proper to recollect, that while men see only a limited space, and while their affections and conduct are regulated, not by aspiring at an universal good, but by exerting their power of making themselves and others happy within the limited scale allotted to each individual, so long will individual history and individual virtue be the readier and more accessible road to general interest and attention; and perhaps we may add, that it is the more useful, as well as the more accessible, inasmuch as it affords an example capable of being easily imitated.

According to the author's idea of Romantic Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends fictitious narrative framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best; which neither exacts nor refuses the


use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the *Épée*; and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals apply to every species of poetry without exception. The date may be in a remote age, or in the present; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and every thing is permitted to him, excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he has no manner of apology. Those, it is probable, will be found the peculiarities of this species of composition; and, before joining the outcry against the vitiated taste that fosters and encourages it, the justice and grounds of it ought to be made perfectly apparent. If the want of sieges and battles and great military evolutions in our poetry is complained of, let us reflect, that the campaigns and heroes of our day are perpetuated in a record that neither requires nor admits of the aid of fiction; and if the complaint refers to the inferiority of our bards, let us pay a just tribute to their modesty, limiting them, as it does, to subjects, which, however indifferently treated, have still the interest and charm of novelty, and which thus prevents them from adding insipidity to their other more insuperable defects.

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

ComE LUCY! while 't is morning hour,
The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,
Where dew lies long upon the flower,
Though vanish'd from the velvet grass.
Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
May serve us for a sylvan bridge;
For here, compell'd to disunite,
Round petty isles the runnels glide,
And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallow murmurers waste their might,
Yielding to footstep free and light
A dry-shod pass from side to side,



II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
Titania's foot without a slip,
Like thine, though timid, light, and slim,
From stone to stone might safely trip,
Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to dip
That binds her slipper's silken rim.
Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear
That this same stalwart arm of mine,
Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
Shall shrink beneath the burthen dear
Of form so slender, light, and fine.—
So, — now, the danger dared at last,
Look back and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copse-wood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan.
Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat;
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would not that their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,

How Lucy of the lofty eye,
Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
She for whom lords and barons sigh,
Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
And why does Lucy shun mine eye?—
Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,
Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur guess'd?
O! quicker far is lovers' ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hue of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crimson glow,
Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed so low.
Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain wouldst hide,
The passing pang of humbled pride;

Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh !
Thou wouldst not yield, for wealth or rank.
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne :
Why, then, should vain repinings rise,
That to thy lover fate denies
A nobler name, a wide domain,
A baron's birth, a menial train,
Since heaven assign'd him, for his part,
A lyre, a faulchion, and a heart ?

VI.

My sword——its master must be dumb ;
But when a soldier names my name,
Approach, my Lucy ! fearless come,
Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
My heart——'mid all yon courtly crew,
Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as mine ?
They praised thy diamond's lustre rare—
Match'd with thine eyes, I thought it faded ;
They praised the pearls that bound thy hair—
I only saw the locks they braided ;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and land.
And titles of high birth the token—

I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
 Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.
 And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
 I might have learn'd their choice unwise,
 Who rate the dower above the soul,
 And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre it is an idle toy,
 That borrows accents not its own,
 Like warbler of Columbian sky,
 That sings but in a mimic tone.¹
 Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
 Nor boasts it aught of border spell;
 Its strings no feudal slogan pour,
 Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
 No shouting clans applauses raise,
 Because it sung their fathers' praise;
 On Scottish moor, or English down,
 It ne'er was graced with fair renown;
 Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
 One favouring smile from fair BUCCLEUCH!
 By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
 And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell,
 Of errant knight and damozelle;
 Of the dread knot a wizard tied,
 Or punishment of maiden's pride,

In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—like COLLINS, ill-starr'd name!
Whose lay's requital was, that tardy fame,
Who bound no laurel round his living head,
Should hang it o'er his monument when dead,—
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of Fairy-land;
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream:
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice,
What other song can claim her Poet's voice?

THE

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

WHERE is the maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
She must be lovely and constant and kind,
Holy and pure and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer and gentle of mood,
Courteous and generous and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;
Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sun-beam kiss'd the wave;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs:

Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing was deep.
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long and the skirmish hot;
His dinted helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.

 All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must lull him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best.
Till sleep sink down upon his breast,
 Like the dew on a summer-hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog grey,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,

 When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
 While hastily he spoke.

IV.

“Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch’d his harp with that dying fall,

So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem’d an angel’s whisper’d call
To an expiring saint?

And hearken, my merrymen! What time or where

Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle-plume in her dark-brown hair,
That pass’d from my bower e’en now?”—

V.

Answer’d him Richard de Brettville; he
Was chief of the Baron’s minstrelsy,—

“Silent, noble Chieftain, we

Have sate since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings
Murmur’d from our melting strings,

And hush’d you to repose.
Had a harp-note sounded here,
It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden’s half-form’d sigh,
When she thinketh her lover near.”

Answer’d Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer-hall,—

“Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross’d;

Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
That drop when no winds blow.»—

VI.

«Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
And redden'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
Made the warrior's heart-blood chill!
The trustiest thou of all my train,
My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise,
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.
Gifted like his gifted race,
He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime;
Sign and sigil well doth he know,
And can bode of weal and woe,
Of kingdoms' fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.

He shall tell if middle earth
 To that enchanting shape gave birth,
 Or if 't was but an airy thing,
 Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
 Framed from the rainbow's varying dyes,
 Or fading tints of western skies.
 For, by the blessed rood I swear,
 If that fair form breathe vital air,
 No other maiden by my side
 Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!—

VII.

The faithful page he mounts his steed,
 And soon he cross'd green Irthing's mead,
 Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant plain,
 And Eden barr'd his course in vain.
 He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,
 For feats of chivalry renown'd,
 Left Maybungh's mound and stones of power.
 By druids raised in magic hour,
 And traced the Eamont's winding way,
 Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the path-way still
 Winding betwixt the lake and hill;
 Till on the fragment of a rock,
 Struck from its base by lightning shock,
 He saw the hoary sage:
 The silver moss and lichen twined,
 With fern and deer-hair check'd and lined,
 A cushion fit for age;

And o'er him shook the aspen tree,
A restless rustling canopy.
Then sprung young Henry from his selle,
 And greeted Lyulph grave,
And then his master's tale did tell,
 And then for counsel crave.
The Man of Years mused long and deep,
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,
And then, as rousing from a sleep,
 His solemn answer gave.

IX.

* That maid is born of middle earth,
 And may of man be won,
Though there have glided since her birth,
 Five hundred years and one.
But where's the knight in all the north,
That dare the adventure follow forth,
So perilous to knightly worth,
 In the Valley of St John?
Listen, youth, to what I tell,
And bind it on thy memory well;
Nor muse that I commence the rhyme
Far distant 'mid the wrecks of time.
The mystic tale, by bard and sage,
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

LYULPH'S TALE.

KING ARTHUR has ridden from merry Carlisle,
 When Pentecost was o'er;

He journey'd like errant knight the while,
And sweetly the summer sun did smile
On mountain, moss, and moor.
Above his solitary track
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,
Amid whose yawning gulphs the sun
Castumber'd radiance red and dun,
Though never sun-beam could discern
The surface of that sable tarn,
In whose black mirror you may spy
The stars, while noon-tide lights the sky.
The gallant King he skirted still
The margin of that mighty hill;
Rocks upon rocks incumbent hung,
And torrents, down the gullies flung,
Join'd the rude river that brawld on,
Recoiling now from crag and stone,
Now diving deep from human ken,
And raving down its darksome glen.
The monarch judg'd this desert wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.

O rather he chose, that monarch bold,
On ven'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide;

The bursting crash of a foeman's spear,
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale;
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever;
For he left that lady so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear;
And the frank-hearted monarch full little did wot,
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII.

He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, and gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.
With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of SAINT JOHN,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sun-beams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein;

With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.

Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose, with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A pond'rous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.
Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clench'd, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the grey walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,

No guard beside the bridge was found,
And, where the Gothic gateway frown'd,
Glanced neither bill nor bow.

XIV.

Beneath the castle's gloomy pride.
In ample round did Arthur ride
Three times; nor living thing he spied,
Nor heard a living sound,
Save that, awakening from her dream,
The owlet now began to scream,
In concert with the rushing stream,
That wash'd the battled mound;
He lighted from his goodly steed,
And he left him to graze on bank and mead:
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,
That reach'd the entrance grim and grey,
And he stood the outward arch below,
And his bugle horn prepared to blow,
In summons blithe and bold,
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep
The guardian of this dismal keep,
Which well he guess'd the hold
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,
Or pagan of gigantic limb,
The tyrant of the wold.

XV.

The ivory bugle's golden tip
Twice touch'd the monarch's manly lip,
And twice his hand withdrew.

Think not but Arthur's heart was good!

His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,

Had a pagan host before him stood,

He had charged them through and through;

Yet the silence of that ancient place

Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space

Ere yet his horn he blew.

But, instant as its larum rung,

The castle-gate was open flung,

Portcullis rose with crashing groan

Full harshly up its groove of stone,

The balance beams obey'd the blast,

And down the trembling drawbridge cast,

The vaulted arch before him lay,

With nought to bar the gloomy way,

And onward Arthur paced, with hand

On Caliburn's resistless brand.

XVI.

A hundred torches, flashing bright,

Dispell'd at once the gloomy night

That lour'd along the walls,

And show'd the King's astonish'd sight

The inmates of the halls.

Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,

Nor giant huge of form and limb,

Nor heathen knight was there;

But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,

Show'd by their yellow light and soft,

A band of damsels fair.

Onward they came, like summer wave
That dances to the shore ;
An hundred voices welcome gave,
And welcome o'er and o'er !
An hundred lovely hands assail
The bucklers of the monarch's mail,
And busy labour'd to unhasp
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,
And one flung odours on his hair ;
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,
One wreath'd them with a myrtle crown.
A bride, upon her wedding-day,
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.

XVII.

Loud laugh'd they all,—the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train :
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'T was one reply,—loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn,
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintagel's spear ;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length ;—

One, while she aped a martial stride,
 Thence on her brows the helmet's pride,
 To it scream'd, 't wixt laughter and surprise,
 To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
 A revel-shout, and triumph song,
 Thus gaily march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII.

Through many a gallery and hall
 They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
 At length, beneath a fair arcade
 Their march and song at once they staid.
 The eldest maiden of the band
 (The lovely maid was scarce eighteen)
 Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
 And reverend silence did command,
 On entrance of their Queen;
 And they were mute.—But as a glance
 They steal on Arthur's countenance
 Bewilder'd with surprise,
 Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
 In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
 And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

The attributes of those high days
 Now only live in minstrel lays,
 For Nature, now exhausted, still
 Was then profuse of good and ill.
 Strength was gigantic, valour high,
 And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,

And beauty had such matchless beam,
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet e'en in that romantic age,

Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,

Advanced the castle's Queen !
While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
That flash'd expression strong ;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced king could brook,

The gaze that lasted long.
A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,

Had whisper'd, « Prince, beware ;
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare ! »

XX.

At once, that inward strife suppress'd,
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave

Construction fair and true
For light maidens' idle mirth,
Drew from lonely glens their birth,
New to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honour'd guest.
The monarch meetly thanks express'd :
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

Now in her turn abash'd and shy,
And with indifference seem'd to hear
The toys he whisper'd in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That show'd an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide :
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
That heaved her bosom's pride.
Slight symptoms these ; but shepherds know
How hot the mid-day sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky ;
And so the wily monarch guess'd,
That this assumed restraint express'd
More ardent passions in the breast,
That were e're to the eye.

Closer he press'd, while beakers rang,
While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
 Still closer to her ear—
But why pursue the common tale?
Or wherefore show how knights prevail
 When ladies dare to hear?
Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
 Till, mastering all within,
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
 And folly into sin?

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO SECOND.

LYULPH'S TALE CONTINUED.

I.

ANOTHER day, another day,
And yet another glides away !
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.
Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
Lies loitering in a lady's bower ;
The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer.
And Caliburn, the British pride,
Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

Other day, another day,
And yet another, glides away.

Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
He thinks not of the Table Round ;
In lawless love dissolved his life,
He thinks not of his beauteous wife ;
Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest ;
Better to wreath, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a Paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away :
But she, that soothes his dream, with fear
Beholds his hour of waking near.

III.

Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our pace in Virtue's toilsome way ;
But Guendolen's night far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale's solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,

And, born of his resentment heir,
 He try'd to guile that lady fair,
 To sink in slothful sin and shame
 The champions of the Christian name.
 Will-kill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
 And all to promise, nought to give,
 The timid youth had hope in store,
 The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
 As wilder'd children leave their home,
 After the rainbow's arch to roam,
 Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
 Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV.

Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
 She practised thus—till Arthur came,
 Then frail humanity had part,
 And all the mother claim'd her heart.
 Forgot each rule her father gave,
 Sunk from a princess to a slave,
 Too late must Guendolen deplore,
 He, that has all, can hope no more !
 Now, must she see her lover strain,
 At every turn, her feeble chain ;
 Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
 To view each fast-decaying link.
 Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
 Her vest to zone, her locks to braid ;
 Each varied pleasure heard her call,
 The feast, the tourney, and the ball :
 Her storied lore she next applies,
 Taxing her mind to aid her eyes ;

Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!

V.

Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realm to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse and arbour deck the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——
Vain art! vain hope! 't is fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest free.

VI.

Three summer months had scantily flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a monarch sway,
Duties unknown to humbler men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—

She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
And then her looks to heaven she raised;
One palm her temples veil'd, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride;
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest!

VII.

At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the monarch's conscience took.
Eager he spoke—"No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir:
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To chuse that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive.—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride."——
He spoke, with voice resolved and high—
The lady sigh'd him not reply.

VIII.

At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stir'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray,
Ere yet a sun-beam, through the mist,
The castle battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,
His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood :
Sandall'd her feet, her ancles bare,
And eagle plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
«Thou goest!» she said, «and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou stay?
No! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
Part we like lover and like friend.»

She raised the cup—"Not this the juice
The luggish vines of earth produce;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love!"—she said, and quaff'd;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

The courteous monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddle-bow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell.
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasants still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew.
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed
Until he gain'd the hill;
Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood exhausted, still.
The monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed—
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
I arkening against the morning sky;

But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The King wends back to fair Carlisle:
And cares, that cumber royal sway,
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought;
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne;
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
And Roman Lucius, own'd his might:
And wide were through the world renown'd
The glories of his Table Round.
Each knight, who sought adventurous fame,
To the bold court of Britain came,
And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

For this the King, with pomp and pride,
Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd prince and peer,

All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,

To come from far and near.

At such high tide, were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came

In lists to break a spear;

And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trod some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost

Before him must appear.

Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to sound

In triumph to their string!

Five hundred years are past and gone,
But Time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne

Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

The heralds named the appointed spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,

Or Carlisle fair and free.

At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met

The flower of chivalry.

There Galaad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,

And love-lorn Tristrem there:
And Dinadam with lively glance,
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askaunce,
 Brunor and Bevidere.
Why should I tell of numbers more?
Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
 Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Clares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more
 Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV

When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
 And marshals clear'd the ring;
A maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight
 And kneel before the King.
Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldrick trapp'd with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ancles bare,
And the eagle plume that deck'd her hair.
Graceful her veil she backwards flung—
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
 Almost cried, «Guendolen!»

But 't was a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
Than of the race of men;
And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's, you might ken.

XV.

Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
« Great Prince ! behold an orphan maid,
In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim;
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of St John.»—
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen:
But she, unruffled at the scene,
Of human frailty construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot, and smiled.

XVI.

« Up ! up ! each knight of gallant crest !
Take buckler, spear, and brand !
He that to-day shall bear him best,
Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
Shall bring a noble dower;
Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
And Carlisle town and tower.»—

Then might you hear each valiant knight,
To page and squire that cried,
«Bring my armour bright, and my courser wight!
'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
May win a royal bride.»—
Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
In haste aside they fling;
The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.
Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and bramble glitter'd gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.

XVII.

Within trumpet sound of the Table Round
Were fifty champions free,
And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise, but three.
Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And plain of honour flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.

From pleading or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, «If speeds my lance.
A queen becomes my bride!
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,
And Carlisle tower and town;
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir'd a crown.»—
So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

The champions, arm'd in martial sort,
Have throng'd into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur's court
Are from the tourney miss'd.
And still these lovers' fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbours' wives.
And one who loved his own.
The first was Lancelot De Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur's crew
(Thereof cam' jeer and laugh),
He as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.
Though envy's tongue would fain surmise,
That, but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame.

Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock's shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

Now caracol'd the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton'd fair,
As all around the lists so wide
In panoply the champions ride.
King Arthur saw, with startled eye,
The flower of chivalry march by,
The bulwark of the Christian creed,
The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
Too late he thought him of the woe
Might from their civil conflict flow :
For well he knew they would not part
Till cold was many a gallant heart.
His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew ;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

“Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound,
Take thou my warder, as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene ;
But mark thou this :—as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,
His fairest guerdon her applause,

So gentle maid should never ask
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task ;
And Beauty's eyes should ever be
/Like the twin stars that soothe the sea,
And Beauty's breath should whisper peace,
And bid the storm of battle cease.
I tell thee this, lest all too far
These knights urge tourney into war.
Blithe at the trumpet let them go,
And fairly counter blow for blow ;—
No striplings these, who succour need
For a razed helm or falling steed.
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,
And threatens death or deadly harm,
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,
Thou drop the warder from thy hands.
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,
Doubt not he chuse thee fitting mate ;
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.”—

XXI.

A proud and discontented glow
O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow ;
She put the warder by :—
“ Reserve thy boon, my liege,” she said,
his charter'd down and limited,
Debased and narrow'd, for a maid
Of less degree than I.
No petty chief, but holds his heir
At a more honour'd price and rare

Than Britain's King holds me!
Although the 'sun-burn'd maid, for dower,
Has but her father's rugged tower,
His barren hill and lee.
King Arthur swore, 'by crown and sword,
'As belted knight, and Britain's lord,
'That a whole summer's day should strive
'His knights, the bravest knights alive!
Recal thine oath! and to her glen
Poor Gyneth can return agen;
Not on thy daughter will the stain,
That soils thy sword and crown, remain.
But think not she will e'er be bride
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;
Pendragon's daughter will not fear
For clashing sword or splinter'd spear,
Nor shrink though blood should flow;
And all too well sad Guendolen
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,
That child of hers should pity when
Their meed they undergo."

XXII.

He frown'd and sigh'd, the monarch bold:—
"I give—what I may not withhold;
For, not for danger, dread, or death,
Must British Arthur break his faith.
Too late I mark, thy mother's art
Hath taught thee this relentless part.
I blame her not, for she had wrong,
But not to these my faults belong.

Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;
But trust me that, if life be spilt,
In Arthur's love, in Arthur's grace,
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place."
With that he turn'd his head aside,
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,
As, with the trunchcon raised, she sate
The arbitress of mortal fate;
Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks disposed,
How the bold champions stood opposed;
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell
Upon his ear like passing-bell!
Then first from sight of martial fray
Did Britain's hero turn away.

XXIII.

But Gyneth heard the clangour high,
As hears the hawk the partridge-cry.
Oh! blame her not! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs!—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
Awhile untroubled view;
So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
~~White~~ plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breast-plate bloodless shone;
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone

Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

But soon to earnest grew their game,
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights who shall rise no more!
Gone was the pride the war that graced,
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced,
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway,
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulphing stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV.

Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the prime.

Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses grey,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
/ And quaked with ruth and fear ;
But still she deem'd her mother's shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
Even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race),
O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled,
His heart's blood dyed her sandals red.
But then the sky was overcast,
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
And from the gulph, -- tremendous birth !
The form of Merlin rose.

XXVI.

Sternly the wizard prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—

“Madmen,” he said, “your strife forbear!
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear

The doom thy fates demand!

Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn’d to feel.
Yet, because thy mother’s art
Warp’d thine unsuspecting heart,
And for love of Arthur’s race,
Punishment is blent with grace,
Thou shalt bear thy penance lone,
In the Valley of Saint John,
And this weird¹ shall overtake thee;—
Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
For feats of arms as far renown’d
As warrior of the Table Round.
Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to number
All their woes from Gyneth’s pride,
When the Red Cross champions died.”—

XXVII.

As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth’s eye
Slumber’s load begins to lie;
Fear and Anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O’er her brow her hand she draws;

Twice her strength in vain she tries,
From the fatal chair to rise;
Merlin's magic doom is spoken,
Vanoc's death must now be wroken.
Slow the dark-fringed eye-lids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves.
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

Still she bears her weird alone,
In the valley of Saint John;
And her semblance oft will seem
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.
While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,

East and west, and south and north,
From the Liffy, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Well nigh lost is Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom.

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.

I.

Here pause, my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,
And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way

Of lazy sauntering has sought ;
 Lordlings and witlings not a few,
 Incapable of doing aught,
 Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
 Here is no longer place for me ;
 For, Lucy, thou would'st blush to see
 Some phantom, fashionably thin,
 With limb of lath and kerchief'd chin,
 And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
 Steal sudden on our privacy.
 And how should I, so humbly born,
 Endure the graceful spectre's scorn ?
 Faith ! ill I fear, while conjuring wand
 Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.

Or grant the hour be all too soon
 For Hessian boot and pantaloön,
 And grant the loungee seldom strays
 Beyond the smooth and gravell'd maze,
 Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
 Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
 Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
 Theirs rules from Nature's boundless grace,
 But their right paramount assert
 To limit her by pedant art,
 Denying whate'er of vast and fair
 Exceeds a canvas three feet square.
 This thicket, for their *gumption* fit,
 May furnish such a happy *bit*.
 Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
 Their own sweet lays by waxen light,

Half in the salver's tinkle drown'd,
While the *chasse-café* glides around;
And such may hither secret stray,
To labour an extempore:
Our sportsman, with his boisterous hollo,
May here his wiser spaniel follow,
Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tiring-room;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buzz.

III.

But oh, my Lucy, say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart!
No parents thine, whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's!—Can it be
That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pie,
Who loves in the saloon to show
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drown'd;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;

One, for the simple manly grace
 That wout to deck our martial race,
 Who comes in foreign trashery
 Of tinkling chain and spur,
 A walking haberdashery,
 Of feathers, lace, and fur :
 In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
 Horse-milliner¹ of modern days.

IV.

Or is it he, the wordy youth,
 So early train'd for statesman's part,
 Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
 As themes that he has got by heart;
 Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
 Whose logic is from Single-speech;
 Who scorns the meanest thought to vent,
 Save in the phrase of Parliament;
 Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
 Calls "order," and "divides the house,"
 Who "craves permission to reply,"
 Whose "noble friend is in his eye;"
 Whose loving tender some have reckon'd
 A *motion*, you should gladly *second*?

V.

What, neither? Can there be a third,
 To such resistless swains preferr'd?—

¹ The trammels of the palfraye pleased his sight,
 And the horse-millanere his head with roses dight "

ROWLEY'S *Ballads of Charitie.*

O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured pride?
Forgive me, love, I cannot bear
That alter'd and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard's line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dew-drop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wile
From Lucy more than careless smile;
But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skill'd through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—if such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o'er.

VI.

What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur's arm?
Or is it, that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover's stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake,
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,

And this trim sward of velvet green
Were carpet for the fairy queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell,
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unkind.

VII.

But wouldst thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,
There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
'T were hard to name in minstrel phrase,
A landaulet and four blood-bays,
But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern Land.
'T is there—nay, draw not back thy hand!—
'T is there this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, bless'd with many a holy prayer,
Can change to rapture lover's care,
And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstasy.

VIII.

Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
Has been thy lover's tale and song.
O why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say

One word her friend to bless?
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,
O let the word be YES!

BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

LONG loved, long woo'd, and lately won,
My life's best hope, and now mine own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recal our favourite haunts agen?
A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,
As the rough warrior's brow may bear
A likeness to a sister fair.
- Full well advised our Highland host,
That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,
While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base
Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise.
The keen old carle, with Scottish pride,
He praised his glen and mountains wide;

An eye he bears for nature's face,
 Ay, and for woman's lovely grace.
 Even in such mean degree we find
 The subtle Scot's observing mind;
 For, nor the chariot nor the train
 Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
 But when old Allan would expound
 Of Beal-na-paish ¹ the Celtic sound,
 His bonnet doff'd, and bow, applied
 His legend to my bouny bride;
 While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
 Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
 Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
 Turn thee, my love! look back once more
 To the blue lake's retiring shore.
 On its smooth breast the shadows seem
 Like objects in a morning dream,
 What time the slumberer is aware
 He sleeps, and all the vision's air:
 Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
 In hues of bright reflection drawn,
 Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
 Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;
 The summer clouds so plain we note
 That we might count each dappled spot:
 We gaze and we admire, yet know
 The scene is all delusive show.

¹ Beal-na-paish, the Vale of the Bridal.

Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw;
Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could e'er prove true!

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view
Up the fair glen our destined way!
The fairy path that we pursue,
Distinguish'd but by greener hue,
Winds round the purple brae,
While Alpine flowers of varied dye
For carpet serve or tapestry.
See how the little runnels leap,
In threads of silver, down the steep,
To swell the brooklet's moan!
Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
Of rowan, birch, and alder-leaves,
So lovely, and so lone.
There's no illusion there, these flowers,
That wailing brook, these lovely bowers,
Are, Lucy, all our own;
And, since thine Arthur call'd thee wife,
Such seems the prospect of his life,
A lovely path, on-winding still,
By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
'Tis true that mortals cannot tell
What waits them in the distant dell;
But be it hap, or be it harm,
We tread the path-way arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
I could thy bidding twice deny,
When twice you pray'd I would again
Resume the legendary strain
Of the bold knight of Triermain?
At length yon peevish vow you swore,
That you would sue to me no more,
Until the minstrel fit drew near,
And made me prize a listening ear.
But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
Continuance of the knightly lay,
Was it not on the happy day
That made thy hand mine own?
When, dizzied with mine ecstasy,
Nought past, or present, or to be,
Could I or think on, hear, or see,
Save, Lucy, thee alone!
A giddy draught my rapture was,
As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied
In yon fair capital of Clyde;
My harp—or let me rather chuse
The good old classic form—my Muse
(For harp's an over-scutched phrase,
Worn out by bards of modern days),
My Muse, then—seldom will she wake
Save by dim wood and silent lake.

She is the wild and rustic maid,
Whose foot unsandall'd loves to tread
Where the soft green-sward is inlaid
 With varied moss and thyme ;
And, lest the simple lily-braid,
That coronets her temples, fade,
She hides her still in greenwood shade,
 To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes ! The murmur dear
Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,
 The glade hath won her eye ;
She longs to join with each blithe rill
That dances down the Highland hill,
 Her blither melody.
And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,
She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear
How closed the tale, my love whilere
 Loved for its chivalry.
List how she tells, in notes of flame,
" Child Roland to the dark tower came ! "

THE
BRIDAL OF TRIERMÄIN.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

BEWCASTLE now must keep the Hold,
 Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen hold
 Must only shoot from battled wall ;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
 And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Tarras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
 And Eskdale foray Cumberland.
Of wasted field and plunder'd flocks
 The Borderers bootless may complain ;
They lack the sword of brave De Vaux,
 There comes no aid from Triermäin.
That lord, on high adventure bound,
 Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round.
 In the valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,
 The moon twelve summer nights was old,
 And shone both fair and full ;
 High in the vault of cloudless blue,
 O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
 Her light composed and cool.
 Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
 Sir Roland eyed the vale ;
 Chief, where, distinguish'd from the rest,
 Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
 The dwelling of the fair distress'd,
 As told grey Lyulph's tale.
 Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
 Was quivering on his armour bright,
 In beams that rose and fell,
 And danced upon his buckler's boss,
 That lay beside him on the moss,
 As on a crystal well.

III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
 While on the mound the moonlight stream'd.
 It alter'd to his eyes ;
 Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
 To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
 Fain think, by transmutation strange,
 He saw grey turrets rise.
 But scarce his heart with hope throb'd high,
 Before the wild illusions fly,
 Which fancy had conceived,
 Abetted by an anxious eye
 That long'd to be deceived.

It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,
 Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark and battlement and spire
 In the red gulf we spy.
For seen, by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noontide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
 Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
 The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
 Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
 To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
 And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
 He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
Inyoking every Saint at need,
 For aid to burst the spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
 Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast,
Before the fury of the blast,
 The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills
The upland showers had swoll'n the rills,
 And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was spread
 A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave
(No human step the storm durst brave),
To moody meditation gave
 Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent-sound,
And the sad wind that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
 A broken slumber stolé.

VI.

'T was then was heard a heavy sound,
 (Sound strange and fearful there to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
 Dwelt but the gor-cock and the deer :)
As starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard, in clangour stern,
 That deep and solemn swell;
Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoké
Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
 Or city's larum-bell.

What thought was Roland's first when fell,
 In that deep wilderness, the knell
 Upon his startled ear?
 To slander warrior were I loth,
 Yet must I hold my minstrel troth, —
 It was a thought of fear.

VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
 That chased that momentary chill;
 For love's keen wish was there,
 And eager hope, and valour high,
 And the proud glow of chivalry,
 That burn'd to do and dare.
 Forth from the cave the warrior rush'd,
 Long ere the mountain-voice was hush'd,
 That answer'd to the knell;
 For long and far the unwonted sound,
 Lddying in echoes round and round,
 Was toss'd from fell to fell;
 And Glaramara answer'd sung,
 And Grisdale-pike responsive rung,
 And Legbert heights their echoes swung,
 As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
 The knight, bodeafen'd and amazed,
 Till all was hush'd and still,
 Saye the swoll'n torrent's sullen roar,
 And the night-blast that wildly bore
 Its course along the hill.

Then on the northern sky there came
 A light, as of reflected flame,
 And over Legbert-head,
 As if by magic art controll'd,
 A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
 Its orb of fiery red;
 Thou wouldst have thought some demon dire
 Came mounted on that car of fire,
 To do his errand dread.
 Far on the sloping valley's course,
 On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
 Shingle and scree,¹ and fell and force,²
 A dusky light arose:
 Display'd, yet alter'd was the scene;
 Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
 E'en the gay thicket's summer green,
 In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had mark'd the sun-beams set,
 At eve, upon the coronet
 Of that enchanted mound,
 And seen but crags at random flung,
 That, o'er the brawling torrent hung,
 In desolation frown'd.
 What sees he by that meteor's loui ?
 A banner'd castle, keep, and tower,
 Return the lurid gleam,
 With battled walls and buttress fast,

¹ Bank of loose stones.² Water-fall.

And barbican ¹ and ballium ² vast,
 And in flanking towers, that cast
 Their shadows on the stream.
 'Tis no deceit; distinctly clear
 Crenell ³ and parapet appear,
 While o'er the pile that meteor drear
 Makes momentary pause;
 Then forth its solemn path it drew,
 And fainter yet and fainter grew
 Those gloomy towers upon the view,
 As its wild light withdraws.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
 O'er crag and stream, through briar and bush;
 Yet far he had not sped,
 Ere sunk was that portentous light
 Behind the hills, and utter night
 Was on the valley spread.
 He paused perforce,—and blew his horn;
 And on the mountain-echoes borne
 Was heard an answering sound,
 A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
 In middle air it seem'd to float
 High o'er the battled mound;
 And sounds were heard, as when a guard
 Of some proud castle holding ward,
 Pace forth their nightly round,

¹ The outer defence of the castle-gate.

² Fortified court

Apertures for shooting arrows.

The valiant Knight of Tiermain
 Rung forth his challenge-blast again,
 But answer came there none;
 And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
 Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
 Until the dawning shone;
 And when it dawn'd, that wondrous sight
 Distinctly seen by meteor-light,
 It all had pass'd away!
 And that enchanted mound once more
 A pile of granite fragments bore,
 As at the close of day.

XI.

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart
 Scorn'd from his venturous quest to part,
 He walks the vale once more.
 But only sees, by night or day,
 That shatter'd pile of rocks so grey,
 Hears but the torrent's roar.
 Till when, through hills of azure borne,
 The moon renew'd her silver horn,
 Just at the time her waning ray
 Had faded in the dawning day,
 A summer mist arose;
 Adown the vale the vapours float,
 And cloudy undulations moat
 That tufted mound of mystic note,
 As round its base they close
 And higher now, the heery tide
 Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
 Until the airy billows hide

The rock's majestic Isle ;
 It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,
 By some fantastic fairy drawn
 Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,
 And, sighing as it blew,
 The veil of silver mist it shook,
 And to De Vaux's eager look
 Renew'd that wondrous view.
 For, though the loitering vapour braved
 The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
 Its mantle's dewy fold,
 And, still, when shook that filmy screen,
 Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
 And Gothic battlements between
 Their gloomy length unroll'd.
 Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye
 Once more the fleeting vision die!
 The gallant knight can speed
 As prompt and light as when the hound
 Is opening, and the horn is wound,
 Careers the hunter's steed.
 Down the steep dell his course again
 Hath rival'd archer's shaft;
 But ere the mound he could attain,
 The rocks their shapeless form regain,
 And mocking loud his labour vain,
 The mountain spirit laugh'd.
 Far up the echoing dell was borne
 Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the warrior.—"Am I then
 Fool'd by the enemies of men,
 Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
 Is haunted by malicious fay?
 Is Triermain become your faunt,
 De Vaux your scorn? False fiends, avaunt!
 A weighty curtail-axe he bare;
 The baleful blade so bright and square,
 And the tough shaft of heben wood,
 Were oft in Scottish gore ombrued.
 Backward his stately form he drew,
 And at the rocks the weapon threw,
 Just where one crag's projected crest
 Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest
 Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's hock
 Rent a huge fragment of the rock
 If by mere strength 'twere hard to tell
 Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
 But down the headlong ruin came,
 With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
 Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne
 Crush'd by the copse, the earth was torn
 Till, staid at length, the ruin dread
 Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
 And bade the waters high-swoll'n tide
 Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased the thunder, Triermain
 Survey'd the mound's rude front again

And lo! the ruin had laid bare,
 Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
 Whose moss'd and fractured steps might lend
 The means the summit to ascend;
 And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
 Began to scale these magic rocks,
 And soon a platform won,
 Where, the wild witchery to close,
 Within three lances' length arose
 The Castle of St John!
 No misty phantom of the air,
 No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
 In morning splendour, full and fair,
 The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Unbattled high and proudly tower'd,
 Shaded by pond'rous flankers, lower'd
 The portal's gloomy way.
 Though for six hundred years and more,
 Its strength had brook'd the tempest's roar,
 The scutcheon'd emblems that it bore
 Had suffer'd no decay;
 Put from the eastern battlement
 A turret had made sheer descent,
 And down in recent ruin rent,
 In the mid torrent lay.
 Else, o'er the castle's brow sublime,
 Insults of violence or of time,
 Unfelt had pass'd away,
 In shapeless characters of yore,
 The gate this stern inscription bore:

XVI

INSCRIPTION.

« Patience waits the destined day,
 Strength can clear the cumber'd way
 Warrior, who hast waited long,
 Firm of soul, of sinews strong,
 It is given to thee to gaze
 On the pile of ancient days.
 Never mortal builder's hand
 This enduring fabric plain'd;
 Sign and sigil, word of power,
 From the earth raised keep and tower
 View it o'er, and pace it round,
 Rampart, turret, battled mound
 Dare no more ' to cross the gate
 Were to tumber with thy fate,
 Strength and fortitude were vain '
 View it o'er — and turn again. »

XVII

« That would I, » said the warrior bold,
 « If that my frame were bent and old,
 And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold
 As icicle in thaw,
 But while my heart can feel it dance
 Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
 And this good arm wield sword or lance
 I mock these words of age. »
 He said, and forward felt the spray
 Of strong hand, and straight gave way,
 With rude crash and jarring blay,
 The rusty bolts withdraw ;

But o'er the threshold as he strode,
 And forward took the vaulted road,
 An unseen arm with force amain
 The ponderous gate flung close again,
 And rusted bolt and bar
 Spontaneous took their place once more,
 While the deep arch with sullen roar
 Return'd their surly jar.
 "Now closed is the gin and the prey within,
 By the road of Lanercost !
 But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
 May rue him of his boast."—
 Thus muttering, on the warrior went,
 By dubious light down steep descent.

XVIII

Unbur'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
 Led to the castle's outer court
 There the main fortress broad and tall,
 Spread its long range of bower and hall,
 And tower of varied size,
 Wrought with each ornament extreme,
 That Gothic art, its wildest dream
 Of fancy, could devise.
 But full between the warrior's way
 And the main portal-arch, there lay
 An inner moat ;
 Nor bridge nor boat
 Affords De Vaux the means to cross
 The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
 His arms aside in haste he flings,
 A mass of steel and hauberk rings,

And down falls helm, and down the shield,
 Rough with the dints of many a field.
 Fair was his manly form, and fair
 His keen dark eye, and close curl'd hair,
 When,—all unarm'd, save that the brand
 Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
 With thought to fence his dauntless breast
 But the close gipon's¹ under-vest,
 Whose sullied buff the sable stains
 Of hanberk and of mail retains,—
 Roland De Vaux upon the brim
 Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim

XIX.

Accoutred thus he dared the tide,
 And soon he reach'd the farther side,
 And enter'd soon the hold,
 And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
 Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
 By warriors done of old.
 In middle lists they counter'd here,
 While trumpets seem'd to blow,
 And there, in den or desert drear,
 They quell'd gigantic foe,
 Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
 Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
 Strange in their arms, and strange in face
 Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,
 Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name
 Forgotten long, but better fame.

¹ A sort of doublet, worn beneath the armor

Were here depicted to appal
 Those of an age degenerate,
 Whose bold intrusion braved their fate
 In this enchanted hall.
 For some short space, the venturous knight
 With these high marvels fed his sight;
 Then sought the chamber's upper end,
 Where three broad easy steps ascend
 To an arch'd portal door,
 In whose broad folding leaves of state
 Was framed a wicket window-grate;
 And ere he ventur'd more,
 The gallant knight took earnest view
 The grated wicket-window through.

XX

Oh for his arms! Of martial wood
 Had never mortal knight such need!
 He spied a stately gallery; all
 Of snow-white marble was the wall,
 The vaulting, and the floor;
 And, contrast strange! on either hand
 There stood array'd in sable band
 Four maids whom Afric bore;
 And each a Lybian tiger led,
 Held by as bright and frail a thread,
 As Lucy's golden hair;
 For the leash that bound these monsters dread
 Was but of gossamer.
 Each maiden's short barbaric vest
 Left all unclosed the knee and breast
 And limbs of shapely jet;

White was their vest and turban's fold,
 On arms and ankles rings of gold
 In savage pomp were set;
 A quiver on their shoulders lay,
 And in their hand an assagay.
 Such and so silent stood they there,
 That Roland well nigh hoped,
 He saw a band of statues rare,
 Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
 But, when the wicket oped,
 Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
 Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,
 Scented the air, and lick'd his jaw;
 While these weird maids, in Moorish tongue,
 A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI

' Rash adventurer, bear thee back '
 Dread the spell of Dahomay '
 I'eat the race of Zaharak,
 Daughters of the burning day !

" When the whirlwind's gusts are wheeling
 Ours 't is the dance to braid ;
 Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
 Join the measure that we tread,
 When the moon hath don'd her cloak,
 And the stars are set to reel,
 Shrill when pipes the sad strain,
 Music meet for such as we.

"Where the shatter'd columns lie,
 Showing Carthage once had been,
 If the wandering Santon's eye,
 Our mysterious sites hath seen,—
 Oft he cons the prayer of death,
 To the nations preaches doom,
 'Azrael's brand hath left the sheath!
 Moslems, think upon the tomb!'—

"Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
 Ours the hydra of the fen,
 Ours the tiger of the brake,
 All that plagues the sons of men.
 Ours the tempest's midnight wrack.
 Pestilence that wastes by day—
 Dread the race of Zaharak!
 I can the spell of Dahomay!"—

XXII.

Unconth and strange the accents shall
 Rung those vaulted roofs among;
 Long it was ere, faint and still,
 Died the far-resounding song.
 While yet the distant echoes roll,
 The warrior communed with his soul.
 "When first I took this venturous quest,
 I swore upon the rod,
 Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
 For evil, or for good.
 My forward path, too well I ken,
 Lies yonder fearful ranks between;

For man unarm'd, 't is bootless hope
 With tigers and with fiends to cope—
 Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
 Save famine dire and fell despair?—
 Other conclusion let me try,
 Since, chuse howe'er I list, I die.
 Forward, lies faith and knightly fame,
 Behind, are perjury and shame,
 In life or death I hold my word.—
 With that he drew his trusty sword,
 Caught down a banner from the wall,
 And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

•
 XXXIII.

On high each wayward maiden threw
 Her swathing arm, with wild halloo!
 On either side a tiger sprung—
 Against the leftward foe he flung
 The ready banner, to engage
 With tugging folds the brutal rage;
 The right-hand monster in mid air
 He struck so fiercely and so fair,
 Through gullet and through spinal bone
 The trenchant blade hath sheerly gone
 His grisly brethren ramp'd and yell'd,
 But the slight leash their rage withheld,
 Whilst, 'twixt their ranks, the dangerous foe!
 Firmly, though swift, the champion strode
 To the gallery's bound he drew.
 Safe pass'd an open portal through;
 And then against followers he flung
 The gate, judge if the echoes rung!

Onward his daring course he bore,
 While, mix'd with dying growl and roar,
 Wild jubilee and loud hurra,
 Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV

« Hurra, hurra ! Our watch is done !
 We hail once more the tropic sun.
 Pallid beams of nothein day,
 Farewell, farewell ! Hurra, hurra !

« Five hundred years o'er this cold glen
 Hath the pale sun come round agen ;
 Foot of man, till now, hath ne'er
 Dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

« Warrior ! thou, whose dauntless heart
 Gives us from our ward to part,
 Be as strong in future trial,
 Where resistance is demal.

« Now for Afric's glowing sky,
 Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
 Zatharak and Dahomay !—
 Mount the winds ! Hurra, hurra ! »—

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died
 As if in ether borne astray,
 While through waste halls and chambers wide
 The knight pursued his steady way,

Till to a lofty dome he came,
 That flash'd with such a brilliant flame,
 As if the wealth of all the world
 Were there in rich confusion hurl'd.
 For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
 With duller earth incorporate sleeps,
 Was there in ingots piled, and there
 Coin'd badge of empery it bare;
 Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
 Dimn'd by the diamond's neighbouring ray
 Like the pale moon in morning day,
 And in the midst four maidens stand,
 The daughters of some distant land.
 Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
 That fringes oft a thunder-sky,
 Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
 And cotton fillets bound their hair,
 Slim was their form, then men was shy,
 To catch they bent the humbled eye,
 Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel'd
 And thus their proffer'd gifts reveal'd

XXVI.

CHORUS.

« See the treasures Merlin piled,
 Portion meet for Arthur's child.
 Bathe in Wealth's unbounded stream,
 Wealth that Avarice ne'er could dream ! »

FIRST MAIDEN.

« See these clots of virgin gold !
 Sever'd from the sparry mould,

Nature's mystic alchemy
 In the mine thus bade them lie;
 And their orient smile can win
 Kings to stoop, and saints to sin."

SECOND MAIDEN.

"See these pearls that long have slept;
 These were tears by Naiads wept
 For the loss of Marinel,
 Tritons in the silver shell
 Treasured them, till hard and white
 As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

"Does a livelier hue delight?
 Here are rubies blazing bright,
 Here the emerald's fairy green,
 And the topaz glows between;
 Here their varied hues unite
 In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Leave these gems of poorer shine,
 Leave them all, and look on mine!
 While their glories I expand,
 Shade thine eye-brows with thy hand.
 Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
 Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

"Warrior, seize the splendid store.
 Would 't were all our mountains bore!"

We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"——

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd the knight
Waved aside the treasures bright
« Gentle maidens, rise, I pray !
Bar not this my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys '
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he dig'n'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilt his sword. —
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry,
When lo ! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he hears
Some frolic water-run ;
And soon he reach'd a court-yard square,
Where dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.
On right and left, a fair arcade
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade ;

But, full in front, a door,
 Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it led
 To the lone dwelling of the dead,
 Whose memory was no more.

XIXX

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's space,
 To bathe his parched lips and face,
 And mark'd with well-pleased eye,
 Retracted on the fountain stream,
 In rainbow hues, the dazzling beam
 Of that gay summer sky.
 His senses felt a mild controul,
 Like that which lulls the weary soul,
 From contemplation high
 Relaying, when the ear receives
 The music that the green-wood leaves
 Make to the breeze's sigh.

XXX.

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
 The half-shut eye can frame
 Fair apparitions in the wood,
 As if the nymphs of field and flood
 In gay procession came.
 Are these of such fantastic mould,
 Seen distant down the fair arcade,
 These maids enlink'd in sister-fold,
 Who, late at bashful distance staid,
 Now tripping from the green-wood shade,
 Nearest the musing champion draw,
 And, in a pause of seeming awe,

Again stand doubtful now?—
 Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
 That seems to say, "To please be ours,
 Be yours to tell us how."
 Their hue was of the golden glow
 That suns of Candahar bestow,
 O'er which in slight suffusion flows
 A frequent tinge of paly rose;
 Their limbs were fashion'd fair and free.
 In nature's justest symmetry,
 And wreath'd with flowers, with odours gay
 Their raven ringlets reach'd the waist;
 In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
 The hennah lent each shapely nail,
 And the dark sumah gave the eye
 More liquid and more lustrous dye
 The spotless veil of misty lawn,
 In studied disarrangement, drawn
 The form and bosom o'er,
 To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
 For modesty show'd all too much—
 Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.

"Gentle knight, awhile delay,"
 Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,
 While we pay the duty due
 To our master and to you.
 Over Avarice, over Fear,
 Love triumphant led thee here;

Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.
« Though no treasured gems have we,
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
For the assagay or dart,
Swains have given each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.

« Stay, then, gentle warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;
Stay, O stay!—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine,
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.

« Then shall she you most approve,
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o'er—
Gentle warrior, wouldst thou more?
Wouldst thou more, fair warrior,—she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee.»—

XXXII.

O do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,

For stonè look,
 And meet rebuke,
 He lack'd the heart or time,
 As round the band of syrens trip,
 He kiss'd onc damsel's laughing lip,
 'And press'd another's proffer'd hand,
 Spoke to them all in accents bland,
 But broke their magic circle through,
 "Kind maids," he said, "adieu, adieu!
 My fate, my fortune, forward lies." —
 He said, and vanish'd from their eyes,
 But, as he dared that darksome way,
 Still heard behind their lovely lay
 I an Flower of Courtesy, depart!
 Go, where the feelings of the heart
 With the warm pulse in concord move
 Go, where Virtue sanctions Love! —

XXVIII

Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
 And ruin'd vaults has gone,
 Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
 Or safe retreat, seem'd none,
 And e'en the dismal path he strays
 Grew worse as he went on.
 For cheerful sun, for living air,
 Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
 Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
 That dogg'd him on that dreadful road
 Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
 They show'd, but show'd not how to shun

These scenes of desolate despair,
 These smothering clouds of poison'd air,
 How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
 Though 't were to face yon tigers ranged!

Nay, soothful bards have said,
 So perilous his state seem'd now,
 He wish'd him under arbour bough

With Asia's willing maid.
 When, joyful sound! at distance near
 A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
 And, as it ceased, a lofty lay
 Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.

"Son of Honour, theme of story,
 Think on the reward before ye!
 Danger, darkness, toil despise;
 'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

He that would her heights ascend,
 Many a weary step must wend;
 Hand and foot and knee he tries:
 Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the way,
 Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
 Grasp the boon that 's spread before ye,
 Monarch's power, and conqueror's glory!"

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
 A steep ascent the wanderer found,

And then a turret stair: .
 Not climb'd he far its steepy round
 Till fresher blew the air,
 And next a welcome glimpse was given
 That cheer'd him with the light of heaven
 At length his toil had won . . .
 A lofty hall with trophies dress'd,
 Where, as to greet imperial guest,
 Four maidens stood, whose crimson vest
 Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.

Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
 The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
 Whose easy step and laughing eye
 Her borrow'd air of awe belie;
 The next a maid of Spain,
 Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet bold,
 White ivory skin and tress of gold,
 Her shy and bashful comrade told
 For daughter of Almaine.
 These maidens bore a royal robe,
 With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
 Emblems of empery;
 The fourth a space behind them stood,
 And leant upon a harp, in mood
 Of minstrel ecstacy.
 Of merry England she, in dress
 Like ancient British druidess;
 Her hair an azure fillet bound,
 Her graceful vesture swept the ground,

And, in her hand display'd,
A crown did that fourth maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.

At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
But homage would he none :—
« Rather, » he said, « De Vaux would ride
A wander of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own ;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born knight of England free,
Than sit on despot's throne. »
So pass'd he on, when that fourth maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her finger laid;
Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awaked at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

« Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately tower, and banner'd keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

« Fiends, that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall ! mark it well !
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road.

« It is ~~his~~, the first who e'er
Dared ~~the~~ dismal Hall of Fear ;
His, who hath the snares defied
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

« Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and turret steep !
Tremble keep, and totter tower !
This is Gyneth's waking hour. »——

XXXVII.

Thus while she sung, the venturous knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell ;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.
That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
Had wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye ;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.
All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.

But what of pictured rich and rare
 Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
 Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
 He saw King Arthur's child !
 Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
 From her brow had pass'd away,
 Forget was that fell tourney-day,
 For, as she slept, she smiled.
 It seem'd that the repentant Seer
 Her sleep of many a hundred year
 With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.

That form of maiden loveliness,
 'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
 That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,
 The arms and ankles bare, express
 Of Lyulph's tale the truth.
 Still upon her garment's hem
 Vanoe's blood made purple gem,
 And the warder of command
 Cumber'd still her sleeping hand ;
 Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
 From net of pearl o'er breast of snow ;
 And so fair the slumberer sleeps,
 That De Vaux impoind'd his dreams,
 Vapid all and void of night,
 Holding half her charms to his sight
 Motionless awhile he stood,
 Folds his arms to his breast his hands,
 Trembling in his seat he stood,
 Doubtful her fate he would

Long-enduring spell;
 Doubtful too, when slowly rise
 Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
 What these eyes shall tell.
 "St George! St Mary! can it be,
 That they will kindly look on me!"—

XXXIX.

Gently, lo! the warrior kneels,
 Soft that lovely hand he steals,
 Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
 But the warder leaves her grasp;
 Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder!
 Gyneth startles from her sleep,
 Totters tower, and trembles keep,
 Burst the castle walls asunder!
 Fierce and frequent were the shocks,
 Melt the magic balls away——
 ——But beneath their mystic rocks,
 In the arms of bold De Vaux,
 Safe the princess lay!
 Safe and free from magic power,
 Blushing like the rose's flower
 Opening to the day;
 And round the champion's brows were bound
 The crown that Druidess had wound,
 Of the green laurel-bay.
 And this was what remain'd of all
 The wealth of each enchanted hall,
 The Garland and the Dame:—
 But where should warrior seek the need,
 Due to high worth for daring deed,
 Except from LOVE and FAME!

CONCLUSION.

I.

My Luccy, when the maid is won,
The minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done;
 And to require of bard
That to the dregs his tale should run,
 Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
 When tale or play is o'er;
Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,
And saw a numerous race renew
 The honours that they bore.
Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays,
In morning mist, or evening maze,
 Along the mountain lone,
That fairy fortress often mocks
His gaze upon the castled rocks
 Of the Valley of Saint John;
But never man since brave De Vaux
 The charmed portal won.
'Tis now a vain illusive show,
That melts whene'er the sunbeams glow,
 Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But sec, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps when eve is sinking grey
On this gigantic hill.
So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;
And O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these,
Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When nature's grander scenes unclose!
But Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The green-wood and the wold;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil!
Nor love them less, that o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill;—
My love shall wrap her warm,
And fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.

NOTES.

NOTE I.

Like Collins, ill-star'd name!—P. 160.

COLLINS, according to Johnson, « by indulging some peculiar habits of thought, was exultantly delighted with those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature, and to which the mind is reconciled only by a passive acquiescence in popular traditions. He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the mazes of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens.»

NOTE II.

The Baron of Tryernain —P. 161.

Tryernain was a fief of the Barony of Gilsland, in Cumberland; it was possessed by a ~~Saxon~~ family at the time of the Conquest, but, « after the death of Gilmore, Lord of Tryernaine and Torcrossock, Hubert Vaux gave Tryernaine and Torcrossock to his second son, Ranulph Vaux, which Ranulph afterwards became heir to his elder brother Robert, the founder of Lanercost, who died without issue. Ranulph, being Lord of all Gilsland, gave Gilmore's lands to his own younger son, named Roland, and let the barony descend to his eldest son Robert, son of Ranulph. Roland had issue Alexander, and he Ranulph, after whom succeeded Robert, and they were named Rolands successively, that were lords thereof, until the reign of Edward the Fourth. That house gave for arms, Vert, a bend dexter, chequy, or and gules, » —BURNS *Antiquities of Westmoreland and Cumberland*, vol. II. p. 481.

This branch of Vaux, with its collateral alliances, is now represented by the family of Braddyl of Conishead Priory, in the county palatine of Lancaster; for it appears that about the time above-mentioned, the house of Triermaine was united to its kindred family Vaux of Caterlen, and, by marriage with the heiress of Delamore and Leybourne, became the representative of those ancient and noble families. The male line failing in John de Vaux, about the year 1665, his daughter and heiress, Mabel, married Christopher Richmond, Esq. of Highhead Castle, in the county of Cumberland, descended from an ancient family of that name, lords of Corby Castle, in the same county, soon after the Conquest, and which they alienated about the 15th of Edward the Second, to Andrea de Harcla, Earl of Carlisle. Of this family was Sir Thomas de Raigement (niles auratus), in the reign of King Edward the First, who appears to have greatly distinguished himself at the siege of Kaerlaveroc, with William Baron of Leybourne. In an ancient heraldic poem now extant, and preserved in the British Museum, describing that siege, his arms are stated to be, Or, 2 Bars Gemelles Gules, and a Chief Or, the same borne by his descendants at the present day. The Richmonds removed to their Castle of Highhead in the reign of Henry the Eighth, when the then representative of the family married Marget, daughter of Sir Hugh Lowther, by the Lady Dorothy de Clifford, only child by a second marriage of Henry Lord Clifford, great grandson of John Lord Clifford, by Elizabeth Percy, daughter of Henry (surnamed Hotspur) by Elizabeth Mortimer; which said Elizabeth was daughter of Edward Mortimer, third Earl of Marche, by Philippa, sole daughter and heiress of Lionel, Duke of Clarence.

The third in descent from the above-mentioned John Richmond became the representative of the families of Vaux, of Triermaine, Caterlen, and Torcrossock, by his marriage with Mabel de Vaux, the heiress of them. His grandson Henry Richmond died without issue, leaving five sisters coheiresses, four of whom married; but Margaret, who married William Gale, Esq. of Whitehaven, was the only one who had male issue surviving. She had a son, and a daughter married to Henry Curwen of

Workington, Esq., who represented the County of Cumberland for many years in parliament, and by her had a daughter married to John Christian, Esq. (now Curwen). John, son and heir of William Gale, married Sarah, daughter and heiress of Christopher Wilson of Bardsea Hall, in the county of Lancaster, by Margaret, aunt and coheirs, of Thomas Braddyl, Esq. of Braddyl, and Conishead Priory, in the same county, and had issue four sons and two daughters.—1st, William Wilson, died an infant; 2d, Wilson, who upon the death of his cousin, Thomas Braddyl, without issue, succeeded to his estates and took the name of Braddyl, in pursuance of his will, by the king's sign manual; 3d, William, died young; and, 4th, Henry Richmond, a lieutenant-general of the army, married Sarah, daughter of the Rev. R. Baldwin; Margaret married Richard Greaves Townley, Esq. of Fulbourne, in the county of Cambridge, and of Bellfield, in the county of Lancaster; Sarah married to George Bigland, of Bigland Hall, in the same county.

Wilson Braddyl, eldest son of John Gale, and grandson of Margaret Richmond, married Jane, daughter and heiress of Matthias Gale, Esq. of Catgill Hall, in the county of Cumberland, by Jane, daughter and heiress of the Rev. S. Bennet, D. D.; and, as the eldest surviving male branch of the families above mentioned, he quarters, in addition to his own, their paternal coats in the following order, as appears by the records in the College of Arms—

1st. Argent, a fess azure, between 3 saltiers of the same, charged with an anchor between 2 lions heads erased, or,—Gale.

2d. Or, 3 bars gemelles gules, and a chief or,—Richmond.

3d. Or, a fess chequy, or and gules between 9 gerbes gules,—Vaux of Caterlen.

4th. Gules, a fess chequy, or and gules between 6 gerbes or,—Vaux of Forcrossock.

5th. Argent, a bend chequy, or and gules, for Vaux of Triermain.

6th. Gules, a cross patonce, or,—Delamore.

NOTES TO

7th. Gules, 6 lions rampant argent, 3, 2, and 1,—Leybourne.¹

NOTE III.

And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise.—P. 164.

Dunmailraise is one of the grand passes from Cumberland into Westmoreland. It takes its name from a cairn, or pile of stones, erected, it is said, to the memory of Dunmail, the last King of Cumberland.

NOTE IV.

— — — *Penrith's Table Round*—P. 165.

A circular entrenchment, about half a mile from Penrith, is thus popularly termed. The circle within the ditch is about one hundred and sixty paces in circumference, with openings, or approaches, directly opposite to each other. As the ditch is on the inner side, it could not be intended for the purpose of defence, and it has reasonably been conjectured, that the inclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry, and the embankment around for the convenience of the spectators.

NOTE V.

— *Mayburgh's mound and stones of power.*—P. 165.

Higher up the river Lamont than Arthur's Round Table, is a prodigious inclosure of great antiquity, formed by a collection of stones upon the top of a gently-sloping hill, called Mayburgh. In the plain which it incloses there stands erect an unbewn stone of twelve feet in height. Two similar masses are said to have been destroyed during the memory of man. The whole appears to be a monument of druidical times.

NOTE VI.

Though never sunbeam could discern

The surface of that sabb' tarn.—P. 167.

The small lake called Scales-tarn lies so deeply embosomed

¹ This more detailed genealogy of the family of Triermain was obligingly sent to the author by Major Braddyll of Conishead Priory.

in the recesses of the huge mountain called Saddleback, more poetically Glaramara, is of such great depth, and so completely hidden from the sun, that it is said its beams never reach it, and that the reflection of the stars may be seen at mid-day.

NOTE VII.

——— *Tintadgel's spear.*—P. 172.

Tintadgel Castle, in Cornwall, is reported to have been the birth-place of King Arthur.

NOTE VIII.

— — — *Calburn in Cumbrus length.*—P. 172

This was the name of King Arthur's well-known sword, sometimes also called Excalibur.

NOTE IX.

From Arthur's hand the goblet flew.—P. 183

The author has an indistinct recollection of an adventure somewhat similar to that which is here ascribed to King Arthur, having befallen one of the ancient kings of Denmark. The horn in which the burning liquor was presented to that monarch, is said still to be preserved in the Royal Museum at Copenhagen.

NOTE X.

Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,

Darkening against the morning sky.—P. 183.

——— "We now gained a view of the Vale of St John's, a very narrow dell, hemmed in by mountains, through which a small brook makes many meanderings, wa-ling little inclosures of grass-ground, which stretch up the rising of the hills. In the widest part of the dale you are struck with the appearance of an ancient ruined castle, which seems to stand upon the summit of a little mount, the mountains around forming an amphitheatre. This massive bulwark shows a front of various towers, and makes an awful, rude, and Gothic appearance, with its lofty turrets and ragged battlements; we traced the galleries, the bending arches,

the buttresses. The greatest antiquity stands characterized in its architecture; the inhabitants near it assert it is an antediluvian structure.

"The traveller's curiosity is roused, and he prepares to make a nearer approach, when that curiosity is put upon the rack by his being assured, that if he advances, certain genii who govern the place, by virtue of their supernatural art and necromancy, will strip it of all its beauties, and, by enchantment, transform the magic walls. The vale seems adapted for the habitation of such beings; its gloomy recesses and retirements look like haunts of evil spirits. There was no delusion in the report; we were soon convinced of its truth; for this piece of antiquity, so venerable and noble in its aspect, as we drew near, changed its figure, and proved no other than a shaken massive pile of rocks, which stand in the midst of this little vale, disunited from the adjoining mountains, and have so much the real form and resemblance of a castle, that they bear the name of the Castle Rocks of St John " — HURCHINSON'S *Excursion to the Lakes*, p. 121.

NOTE XI.

The Saxons to subjection brought.—P. 184.

Arthur is said to have defeated the Saxons in twelve pitched battles, and to have achieved the other feats alluded to in the text

NOTE XII.

There Morolt of the iron mare, etc.—P. 185.

The characters named in the following stanza are all of them more or less distinguished in the romances which treat of King Arthur and his Round Table, and their names are strung together according to the established custom of minstrels upon such occasions; for example, in the ballad of the marriage of Sir Gawaine :

Sir Lancelot, Sir Stephen bolde,
They rode with them that daye,
And, foremost of the companye,
There rode the stewarde Kaye.

Soc did Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
 And eke Sir Garratte keen,
 Sir Tristram too, that gentle knight,
 To the forest fresh and green.

NOTE XIII.

And Lancelot, that evermore

Look'd stoln-wise on the quene.—P. 186.

Upon this delicate subject hear Richard Robinson, citizen of London, in his Assertion of King Arthur :

“ But as it is a thing sufficiently apparent that she (Guen-ever, wife of King Arthur) was beautiful, so it is a thing doubted whether she was chaste, yea or no. Truly, so far as I can with honestie, I would spare the unpayred honour and fame of noble women. But yet the truth of the historie pluckes me by the eere, and willethe me not onely, but commandeth me to declare what the ancients have deemed of her. To wrestle or contend with so great authoritie were indeed unto me a controversie, and that greates.”—*Assertion of King Arthure*. Imprinted by John Wolfe, London, 1585.

NOTE XIV.

*There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
 And one who loved his own.*—P. 189.

“ In our forefathers' tyme, when papistrie, as a standyng poole, covered and overflowed all England, fewe books were read in our tongue, saving certayne bookes of chevalrie, as they said, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in the monasteries, by idle monks or wanton chaulons. As one for example, *La mort d'Arthur*; the whole pleasure of which book landeth in two speciall poynts, in open manslaughter and bold bawdrye; in which booke they be counted the noblest knightes that do kill most men without any quarrell, and commit fowlest adulteries by subtlest shiftes; as Sir Launcelot, with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram, with the wife of King Marke, his uncle; Sir Lamerocke, with the wife of King Lote, that was his own aunt. This is good stuffe for wise men to laugh at,

or honest men to take pleasure at, yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and La Morte d'Arthure received into the prince's chamber." — ASCHAM'S *Schoolmaster*.

NOTE XV.

—————valiant Carodac,
 Who won the cup of gold.—P. 189.

See the comic tale of the Boy and the Mantle, in the third volume of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, from the Breton or Norman original of which Ariosto is supposed to have taken his Tale of the Enchanted Cup.

THE

FIELD OF WATERLOO;

A POEM.

Though Valois braved young Edward's gentle hand,
And Albert rush'd on Henry's way-worn band,
With Europe's chosen sons in arms renown'd,
Yet not on Vere's bold archers long they look'd,
Nor Audley's squires nor Mowbray's yeomen brook'd—
They saw their standard fall, and left their monarch bound

AKENSIDE.

TO
HER GRACE
THE
DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON,
PRINCESS OF WATERLOO,
etc. etc. etc.
THE FOLLOWING VERSES
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

THE
FIELD OF WATERLOO.

I.

FAIR Brussels, thou art far behind,
Though, lingering on the morning wind,
We yet may hear the hour
Peal'd over orchard and canal,
With voice prolong'd and measured fall,
From proud Saint Michael's tower.
Thy wood, dark Soignies, holds us now,
Where the tall beeches' glossy bough
For many a league around,
With birch and darksome oak between,
Spreads deep and far a pathless screen,
Of tangled forest ground.
Stems planted close by stems defy
The adventurous foot—the curious eye
For access seeks in vain!
And the brown tapestry of leaves,
Strew'd on the blighted ground, receives
Nor sun, nor air, nor rain.

No opening glade dawns on our way,
No streamlet, glancing to the ray,
Our woodland path has cross'd;
And the straight causeway which we tread
Prolongs a line of dull arcade,
Unvarying through the unvaried shade,
Until in distance lost.

II.

A brighter, livelier scene succeeds;
In groups the scattering wood recedes,
Hedge-rows, and huts, and sunny meads,
And corn-fields glance between;
The peasant, at his labour blithe,
Plies the hook'd staff and shorten'd scythe
But when these ears were green,
Placed close within destruction's scope,
Full little was that rustic's hope
Their ripening to have seen!
And, lo, a hamlet and its fane:—
Let not the gazer with disdain
Their architecture view;
For yonder rude ungraceful shrine,
And disproportion'd spire, are thine,
Immortal WATERLOO!

III.

Fear not the heat, though full and high
The sun has scorch'd the autumn sky,
And scarce a forest straggler now
To shade us spreads a green-wood bough,

These fields have seen a hotter day
 Than e'er was fired by sunny ray.
 Yet one mile on—yon shatter'd hedge
 Crests the soft hill whose long smooth ridge

Looks on the field below,
 And sinks so gently on the dale,
 That not the folds of Beauty's veil

In easier curves can flow.
 Brief space from thence, the ground again,
 Ascending slowly from the plain,

Forms an opposing screen,
 Which, with its crest of upland ground,
 Shuts the horizon all around.

The soften'd vale between
 Slopes smooth and fair for courser's tread;
 Not the most timid maid need dread
 To give her snow-white palfrey head
 On that wide stubble-ground.

Nor wood, nor tree, nor bush are there,
 Her course to intercept or scare,
 Nor fosse nor fence are found,
 Save where, from out her shatter'd bowers,
 Rise Hugomont's dismantled towers.

IV.

Now, see'st thou aught in this lone scene
 Can tell of that which late hath been?—

A stranger might reply,
 "The bare extent of stubble-plain
 Seems lately lighten'd of its grain;
 And yonder sable tracks remain,
 Marks of the peasant's ponderous wain,
 When harvest-home was nigh.

On these broad spots of trampled ground,
 Perchance the rustics danced such round
 As Teniers loved to draw ;
 And where the earth seems scorched by flame.
 To dress the homely feast they came,
 And toiled the kerchief'd village dame
 Around her fire of straw.—

V.

So deem'st thou—so each mortal deems,
 Of that which is from that which seems :
 But other harvest here
 Than that which peasant's scythe demands.
 Was gather'd in by sterner hands,
 With bayonet, blade, and spear.
 No vulgar crop was theirs to reap,
 No stinted harvest thin and cheap !
 Heroes before each fatal sweep
 Fell thick as ripen'd grain ;
 And ere the darkening of the day,
 Piled high as autumn shocks, there lay
 The ghastly harvest of the fray,
 The corpses of the slain.



VI.

Ay, look again—that line so black
 And trampled marks the bivouack,
 Yon deep-graved ruts, the artillery's track,
 So oft lost and won ;
 And close beside, the harden'd mud
 Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,
 The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood,
 Dash'd the hot war-horse on.

These spots of excavation tell
The ravage of the bursting shell—
And feel'st thou not the tainted steam,
That reeks against the sultry beam,
From yonder trenched mound?
The pestilential fumes declare
That Carnage has replenish'd there
Her garner-house profound.

VII.

Far other harvest-home and feast,
Than claims the boor from scythe released,
On these scorch'd fields were known!
Death hover'd o'er the maddening rout,
And, in the thrilling battle-shout,
Sent for the bloody banquet out
A summons of his own.
Through rolling smoke the Demon's eye
Could well each destined guest espy,
Well could his ear in ecstasy
Distinguish every tone
That fill'd the chorus of the fray—
From cannon-roar and trumpet-bray,
From charging squadrons' wild hurra,
From the wild clang that mark'd their way,—
Down to the dying groan,
And the last sob of life's decay
When breath was all but flown.

VIII.

Feast on, stern foe of mortal life,
Feast on!—but think not that a strife,
With such promiscuous carnage rife,

Protracted space may last ;
The deadly tug of war at length
Must limits find in human strength,
And cease when these are pass'd.
Vain hope!--that morn's o'erclouded sun
Heard the wild shout of fight begun
Ere he attain'd his height,
And through the war-smoke volumed high
Still peals that unremitted cry,
Though now he stoops to night.
For ten long hours of doubt and dread,
Fresh succours from the extended head
Of either hill the contest fed ;
Still down the slope they drew,
The charge of columns paused not,
Nor ceased the storm of shell and shot ;
For all that war could do,
Of skill and force, was proved that day,
And turn'd not yet the doubtful fray
On bloody Waterloo.

IX.

Pale Brussels! then what thoughts were thine,
When ceaseless from the distant line
Continued thunders came! -
Each burgher held his breath, to hear
These forerunners of havoc near,
Of rapine and of flame.
What ghastly sights were thine to meet,
When, rolling through thy stately street,
The wounded show'd their mangled plight
In token of the unfinish'd fight,

And from each anguish-laden wain
 The blood-drops laid thy dust like rain!
 How often in the distant drum
 Heard'st thou the fell Invader come,
 While Ruin, shouting to his band,
 Shook high her torch and gory brand!—
 Cheer thee, fair city! From yon stand,
 Impatient, still his outstretch'd hand
 Points to his prey in vain,
 While maddening in his eager mood,
 And all unwont to be withstood,
 He fires the fight again.

X.

«On! On!» was still his stern exclaim,
 «Confront the battery's jaws of flame!
 Rush on the level'd gun!
 My steel-clad cuirassers, advance!
 Each Hulan forward with his lance,
 My Guard—my chosen—charge for France,
 France and Napoleon!»
 Loud answer'd their acclaiming shout,
 Giving the mandate which sent out
 Their bravest and their best to dare
 The fate their Leader shunn'd to share.
 But He, his country's sword and shield,
 Still in the battle-front reveal'd,
 Where danger fiercest swept the field,
 Came like a beam of light,
 In action prompt, in sentence brief—
 «Soldiers, stand firm!» exclaim'd the Chief,
 «England shall tell the fight!»

XI.

On came the whirlwind—like the last
But fiercest sweep of tempest blast—
On came the whirlwind—steal-gleams broke
Like lightning through the rolling smoke.

The war was waked anew,
Three hundred cannon-mouths roar'd loud,
And from their throats, with flash and cloud,
Their showers of iron threw.

Beneath their fire, in full career,
Rush'd on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couch'd his ruthless spear,
And hurrying, as to havoc near,

The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent broad and strong,
The advancing onset roll'd along,
Forth harbinger'd by fierce acclaim,
That from the shroud of smoke and flame,
Peal'd wildly the imperial name.

XII.

But on the British heart were lost
The terrors of the charging host;
For not an eye the storm that view'd
Changed its proud glance of fortitude,
Nor was one forward footstep staid,
As dropp'd the dying and the dead.
Fast as their ranks the thunders tear,
Fast they renew'd each serried square;
And on the wounded and the slain
Closed their diminish'd files again,

Till from their line scarce spears' lengths three,
Emerging from the smoke they see
Helmet and plume and panoply,—

Then waked their fire at once!
Each musketeer's revolving knell,
As fast, as regularly fell,
As when they practise to display
Their discipline on festal day.

Then down went helm and lance,
Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down reeling steeds and riders went,
Corslets were pierced, and pennons rent;
And to augment the fray,
Wheel'd full against their staggering flanks,
The English horsemen's foaming ranks

Forced their resistless way.
Then to the musket-knell succeeds
The clash of swords—the neigh of steeds—
As plies the smith his clanging trade,
Against the cuirass rang the blade;
And while amid their close array
The well-served cannon rent their way,
And while amid their scatter'd band
Raged the fierce rider's bloody brand,
Recoil'd in common rout and fear,
Lancer and guard and cuirassier,
Horsemen and foot,—a mingled host,
Their leaders fall'n, their standards lost.

XIII.

Then, WELLINGTON! thy piercing eye
This crisis caught of destiny.

The British host had stood
That morn 'gainst charge of sword and lance,
As their own ocean-rocks hold stance,
But when thy voice had said, « Advance ! »

They were their ocean's flood.—
O Thou, whose inauspicious aim
Hath wrought thy host this hour of shame,
Think'st thou thy broken bands will bide
The terrors of yon rushing tide?
Or will thy Chosen brook to feel
The British shock of levell'd steel?

Or dost thou turn thine eye
Where coming squadrons gleam afar,
And fresher thunders wake the war,
And other standards fly?—
Think not that in yon columns, file
Thy conquering troops from distant Dyle
Is Blucher yet unknown?

Or dwells not in thy memory still
(Heard frequent in thine hour of ill),
What notes of hate and vengeance thrill
In Prussia's trumpet tone?—

What yet remains?—shall it be thine
To head the relics of thy line

In one dread effort more?—
The Roman lore thy leisure loved,
And thou canst tell what fortune proved

That chieftain, who, of yore,
Ambition's dizzy paths essay'd,
And with the gladiators' aid

For empire enterprized—
He stood the cast his rashness play'd,
Not the victims he had made,

Dug his red grave with his own blade,
And on the field he lost was laid,
Abhorr'd— but not despised.

XIV.

But if reyles thy fainter thought
On safety—howsoever bought,
Then turn thy fearful rein and ride,
Though twice ten thousand men have died

On this eventful day,
To gild the military fame,
Which thou, for life, in traffic tame

Wilt barter thus away.
Shall future ages tell this tale
Of inconsistence faint and frail?
And art thou He of Lodi's bridge,
Marengo's field, and Wagram's ridge!

Or is thy soul like mountain-tide,
That, swell'd by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power

A torrent fierce and wide;
'Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean, and poor,

Whose channel shows display'd
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
By which these wrecks were made!

XV.

Spur on thy way!—since now thine ear
Has brook'd thy veterans' wish to hear,

Who, as thy flight they eyed,
 Exclaim'd—while tears of anguish came,
 Wrung forth by pride and rage and shame,
 « Oh that he had but died ! »
 But yet, to sum this hour of ill,
 Look, ere thou leavest the fatal ~~hill~~,
 Back on yon broken ranks—
 Upon whose wild confusion gleams
 The moon, as on the troubled streams
 When rivers break their banks,
 And, to the ruin'd peasant's eye,
 Objects half seen roll swiftly by,
 Down the dread current hurl'd—
 So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
 Where the tumultuous flight rolls on
 Of warriors, who, when morn begun,
 Defied a banded world.

XVI.

List—frequent to the hurrying rout,
 The stern pursuers' vengeful shout
 Tells, that upon their broken rear
 Rages the Prussian's bloody spear.
 So fell a shriek was none,
 When Beresina's icy flood
 Redden'd and thaw'd with flame and blood,
 And, pressing on thy desperate way,
 Raised oft and long their wild hurra,
 The children of the Don.
 Thine ear no yell of horror cleft
 So ominous, when, all bereft
 Of aid, the valiant Polack left —

Ay, left by thee—found soldier's grave
In Leipsic's corse-encumber'd wave.
Fate, in these various perils past,
Reserved thee still some future cast :—
On the dread die thou now hast thrown
Hangs not a single field alone,
Nor one campaign—thy martial fame,
Thy empire, dynasty, and name,
Have felt the final stroke ;
And now, o'er thy devoted head
The last stern vial's wrath is shed,
The last dread seal is broke.

XVII.

Since live thou wilt—refuse not now
Before these demagogues to bow,
Late objects of thy scorn and hate,
Who shall thy once imperial fate
Make wordy theme of vain debate.—
Or shall we say, thou stoop'st less low
In seeking refuge from the foe,
Against whose heart, in prosperous life,
Thine hand hath ever held the knife?—

Such homage hath been paid
By Roman and by Grecian voice,
And there were honour in the choice,
If it were freely made.

Then safely come—in one so low,—
So lost,—we cannot own a foe ;
Though dear experience bid us end,
Thee we ne'er can hail a friend.—

Come howsoc'er—but do not hide
 Close in thy heart that germ of pride,
 Erewhile by gifted bard espied,
 That «yet imperial hope ;»
 Think not that for a fresh rebound,
 To raise ambition from the ground,
 We yield thee means or scope.
 In safety come—but ne'er again
 Hold type of independent reign ;
 No islet calls thee lord,
 We leave thee no confederate band,
 No symbol of thy lost command,
 To be a dagger in the hand
 From which we wrench'd the sword.

XVIII.

Yet, e'en in yon sequester'd spot,
 May worthier conquest be thy lot
 Than yet thy life has known ;
 Conquest, unbought by blood or harm,
 That needs not foreign aid nor arm,
 A triumph all thine own.
 Such waits thee when thou shalt controul
 Those passions wild, that stubborn soul,
 That marr'd thy prosperous scene :—
 Hear this—from no unmoved heart,
 Which sighs, comparing what THOU ART
 With what thou MIGHT'ST HAVE BEEN !

XIX.

Thou, too, whose deeds of fame renew'd
 Bankrupt a nation's gratitude,

To thine own noble heart must owe
More than the meed she can bestow.
For not a people's just acclaim,
Not the full hail of Europe's fame,
Thy prince's smiles, thy state's decree,
The ducal rank, the garter'd knee,
Not these such pure delight afford,
As that, when, hanging up thy sword,
Well may'st thou think, « This honest steel
Was ever drawn for public weal ;
And, such was rightful Heaven's decree,
Ne'er sheathed unless with victory ! »

XX.

Look forth, once more, with soften'd heart.
Ere from the field of fame we part ;
Triumph and Sorrow border near,
And Joy oft melts into a tear.
Alas ! what links of love that morn
Has War's rude hand asunder torn !
For ne'er was field so sternly fought,
And ne'er was conquest dearer bought.
Here piled in common slaughter sleep
Those whom affection long shall weep ;
Here rests the sire, that ne'er shall strain
His orphans to his heart again ;
The son, whom, on his native shore,
The parent's voice shall bless no more ;
The bridegroom, who has hardly press'd
His blushing consort to his breast ;
The husband, whom through many a year
Long love and mutual faith endear.

Thou can'st not name one tender tie
But here dissolved its relics lie !
O, when thou see'st some mourner's veil
Shroud her thin form and visage pale,
Or mark'st the matron's bursting tears
Stream when the stricken drum she hears;
Or see'st how manlier grief, suppress'd,
Is labouring in a father's breast,—
With no enquiry vain pursue
The cause, but think on Waterloo !

XXI.

Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers 't was thine to close !—
Mark'd on thy roll of blood what names
To Britain's memory, and to Fame's,
Laid there their last immortal claims !
Thou saw'st in seas of gore expire
Redoubted PICTON's soul of fire—
Saw'st in the mingled carnage lie
All that of PONSONBY could die—
DE LANCY change Love's bridal-wreath
For laurels from the hand of Death—
Saw'st gallant MILLER's failing eye
Still bent where Albion's banners fly,
And CAMERON, in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel;
And generous GORDON, 'mid the strife,
Fall while he watch'd his leader's life.—
Ah ! though her guardian angel's shield
Defended Britain's hero through the field,

Fate not the less her power made known
Through his friends' hearts to pierce his own !

XXII.

Forgive, brave Dead, the imperfect lay ;
Who may your names, your number, say,
What high-strung harp, what lofty line,
To each the dear-earn'd praise assign,
From high-born chiefs of martial fame
To the poor soldier's lowlier name ?
Lightly ye rose that dawning day,
From your cold couch of swamp and clay,
To fill, before the sun was low,
The bed that morning cannot know.—
Oft may the tear the green sod steep,
And sacred be the heroes' sleep,
 Till time shall cease to run ;
And ne'er beside their noble grave
May Briton pass, and fail to crave
A blessing on the fallen brave,
 Who fought with Wellington.

XXIII.

Farewell, sad Field ! whose blighted face
Wears desolation's withering trace ;
Long shall my memory retain
Thy shatter'd huts and trampled grain,
With every mark of martial wrong,
That scathe thy towers, fair Hougomont !
Yet though thy garden's green arcade
The marksman's fatal post was made,

Though on thy shatter'd beeches fell
The blended rage of shot and shell,
Though from thy blacken'd portals torn,
Their fall thy blighted fruit-trees mourn,
Has not such havock bought a name
Immortal in the rolls of fame?
Yes —Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
For many an age remember'd long,
Shall live the Towers of Hougomont.
And Field of Waterloo.

CONCLUSION.

Stern tide of human Time ! that know'st not rest.

But, sweeping from the cradle to the tomb,
Bear'st ever downward on thy dusky breast

Successive generations to their doom ;
While thy capacious stream has equal room

For the gay bark where pleasure's streamers sport,
And for the prison-ship of guilt and gloom,

The fisher-skiff, and barge that bears a court,
Still wafting onward all to one dark silent port.

Stern tide of time! through what mysterious change

Of hope and fear have our frail barks been driven?
For ne'er, before, vicissitude so strange

Was to one race of Adam's offspring given.
And sure such varied change of sea and heaven,

Such unexpected bursts of joy and woe,
Such fearful strife as that where we have striven,

Succeeding ages ne'er again shall know,
Until the awful term when thou shalt cease to flow.

Well hast thou stood, my country!—the brave fight
Hast well maintain'd through good report and ill;
In thy just cause and in thy native might,
And in Heaven's grace and justice constant still
Whether the banded prowess, strength and skill
Of half the world against thee stood array'd,
Or when, with better views and freer will,
Beside thee Europe's noblest drew the blade,
Each emulous in arms the Ocean Queen to aid.

Well thou art now repaid—though slowly rose,
And struggled long with mists thy blaze of fame,
While like the dawn that in the orient glows
On the broad wave its earlier lustre came;
Then eastern Egypt saw the growing flame,
And Maida's myrtles gleam'd beneath its ray,
Where first the soldier, stung with generous shame,
Rivall'd the heroes of the wat'ry way,
And wash'd in foemen's gore unjust reproach away.

Now, island Empress, wave thy crest on high,
And bid the banner of thy patron flow,
Gallant Saint George, the flower of chivalry!
For thou hast faced, like him, a dragon foe,
And rescued innocence from overthrow,
And trampled down, like him, tyrannic might,
And to the gazing world may'st proudly show
The chosen emblem of thy sainted knight,
Who quell'd devouring pride, and vindicated

CONCLUSION.

Yet 'mid the confidence of just renown,
Renown dear-bought, but dearest thus acquired,
Write, Britain, write the moral lesson down ;
'Tis not alone the heart with valour fired,
Discipline so dreaded and admired,
Any a field of bloody conquest known ;
—Such may by fame be lured—by gold be hired—
'Tis constancy in the good cause alone,
Best justifies the meed thy valiant sons have won.

NOTES.

NOTE I.

The peasant, at his labour blithe,

Plus the hook'd staff and shorten'd scythe.—P. 258.

The reaper in Flanders carries in his left hand a stick with an iron hook, with which he collects as much grain as he can cut at one sweep with a short scythe, which he holds in his right hand. They carry on this double process with great spirit and dexterity.

NOTE II.

Pale Brussels! then what thoughts were thine.—P. 262.

It was affirmed by the prisoners of war, that Buonaparte had promised his army, in case of victory, twenty-four hours' plunder of the city of Brussels.

NOTE III.

« Confront the bettery's jaws of flame!

Rush on the level'd gun!»—P. 263.

The characteristic obstinacy of Napoleon was never more fully displayed than in what we may be permitted to hope will prove the last of his fields. He would listen to no advice, and allow of no obstacles. An eye-witness has given the following account of his demeanour towards the end of the action:—

« It was near seven o'clock; Buonaparte, who, till then, had remained upon the ridge of the hill whence he could best behold

what passed, contemplated, with a stern countenance, the scene of this horrible slaughter. The more that obstacles seemed to multiply, the more his obstinacy seemed to increase. He became indignant at these unforeseen difficulties; and, far from fearing to push to extremities an army whose confidence in him was boundless, he ceased not to pour down fresh troops, and to give orders to march forward—to charge with the bayonet—to carry by storm. He was repeatedly informed, from different points, that the day went against him, and that the troops seemed to be disordered; to which he only replied,—‘*En avant ! en avant !*’

“One general sent to inform the Emperor that he was in a position which he could not maintain, because it was commanded by a battery, and requested to know, at the same time, in what way he should protect his division from the murderous fire of the English artillery. ‘Let him storm the battery,’ replied Buonaparte, and turned his back on the aid-de-camp who brought the message.”—*Rélation de la bataille du Mont Saint-Jean. Par un Témoin Oculaire.* Paris, 1815, 8vo. p. 51.

NOTE IV.

The fate their Leader shunn'd to share—P. 263.

It has been reported that Buonaparte charged at the head of his guards at the last period of this dreadful conflict. This, however, is not accurate. He came down, indeed, to a hollow part of the high road leading to Charleroi, within less than a quarter of a mile of the farm of La Haye Sainte, one of the points most fiercely disputed. Here he harangued the guards, and informed them that his preceding operations had destroyed the British infantry and cavalry, and that they had only to support the fire of the artillery, which they were to attack with the bayonet.—This exhortation was received with shouts of *Vive l'Empereur*, which were heard over all our line, and led to an idea that Napoleon was charging in person. But the guards were led on by Ney; nor did Buonaparte approach nearer the scene of action than the spot already mentioned, which the rising banks on each side rendered secure from all such balls as did not come in a straight line. He witnessed the earlier part of the battle fi

places yet more remote, particularly from an observatory which had been placed there by the king of the Netherlands, some weeks before, for the purpose of surveying the country.¹ It is not meant to infer from these particulars that Napoleon showed, on that memorable occasion, the least deficiency in personal courage; on the contrary, he evinced the greatest composure and presence of mind during the whole action. But it is no less true that report has erred in ascribing to him any desperate efforts of valour for recovery of the battle; and it is remarkable, that during the whole carnage, none of his suite were either killed or wounded, whereas scarcely one of the Duke of Wellington's personal attendants escaped unhurt.

NOTE V.

« England shall tell the fight! »—P. 263.

In riding up to a regiment which was hard pressed, the Duke called to the men, *« Soldiers, we must never be beat, - what will they say in England? »* It is needless to say how this appeal was answered.

NOTE VI.

*As plies the smith his clamping trade,
Against the cuirass rang the blade.*—P. 255.

A private soldier of the 95th regiment compared the sound which took place immediately upon the British cavalry mingling with those of the enemy, to *« a thousand tinkers at work mending pots and kettles »*

NOTE VII.

*Or will thy Chosen brook to feel
The British shock of level'd steel.*—P. 266.

No persuasion or authority could prevail upon the French troops to stand the shock of the bayonet. The imperial guards,

¹ The mistakes concerning this observatory have been mutual. The English supposed it was erected for the use of Buonaparte; and a French writer affirms it was constructed by the Duke of Wellington.

in particular, hardly stood till the British were within thirty yards of them, although the French author, already quoted, has put into their mouths the magnanimous sentiment, « The guards never yield—they die.» The same author has covered the plateau, or eminence, of St Jean, which formed the British position, with redoubts and entrenchments which never had an existence. As the narrative, which is in many respects curious, was written by an eye-witness, he was probably deceived by the appearance of a road and ditch which runs along part of the hill. It may be also mentioned, in criticising this work, that the writer states the Chateau of Hougomont to have been carried by the French, although it was resolutely and successfully defended during the whole action. The enemy, indeed, possessed themselves of the wood by which it is surrounded, and at length set fire to the house itself; but the British (a detachment of the Guards, under the command of Colonel Macdonnell, and afterwards of Colonel Home) made good the garden, and thus preserved, by their desperate resistance, the post which covered the return of the Duke of Wellington's right flank.

